Chronicles

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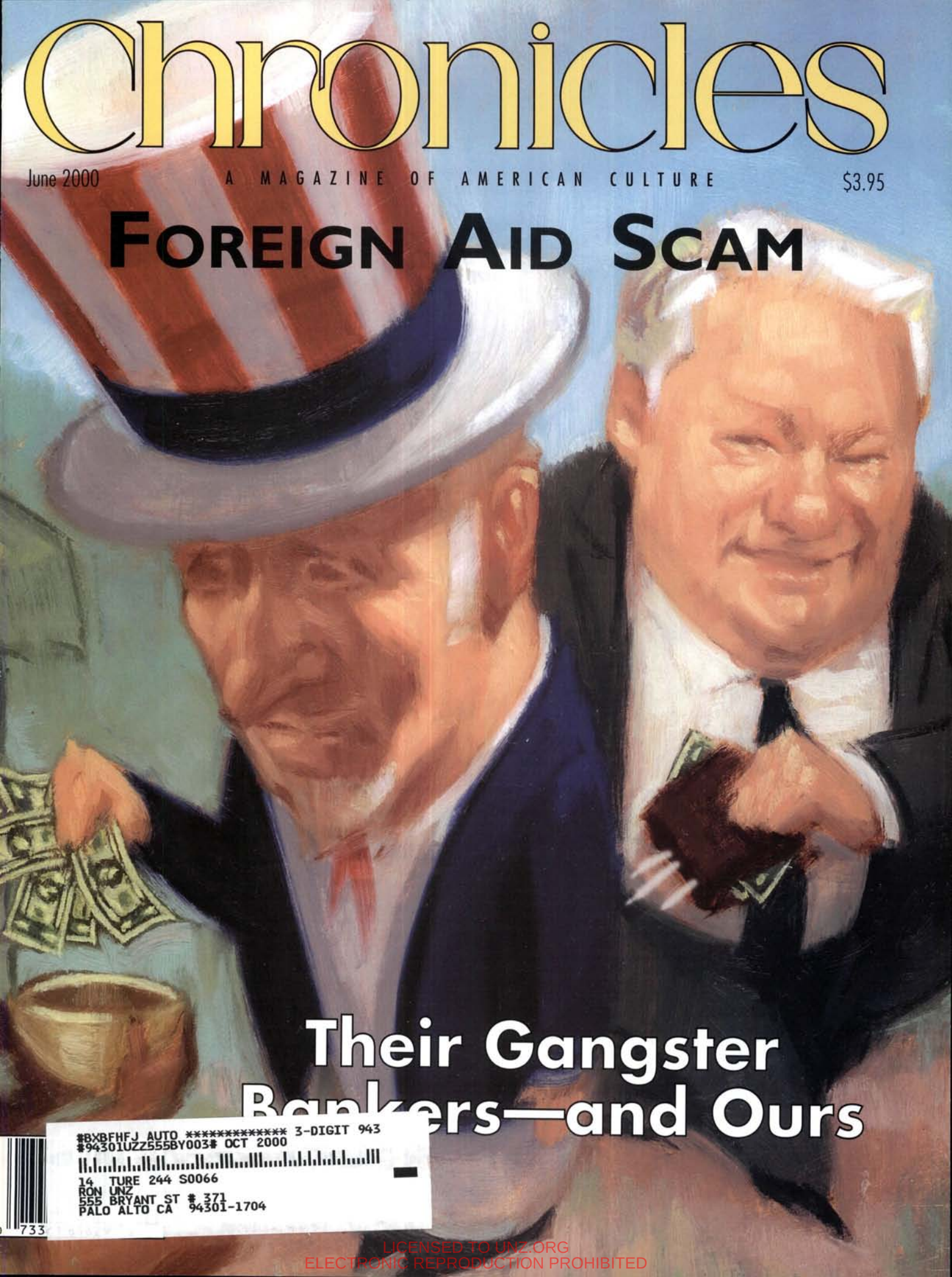

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Does St. Bozo's Parish No Longer Amuse You?

In many Catholic parishes today, the sense of the sacred — of mystery and majesty and even of worship itself — has largely been banished. The bells, incense, votive candles, and Communion rail are gone. The Tabernacle with the reserved Sacrament can't be found. Elegant statues of our friends, the saints, are locked in the basement, replaced by balloons, banners with greeting-card sentiments, and other dime-store decorations. The organ gathers cobwebs. The sanctuary has become a stage. And the kneelers are now being ripped out, the crucifix taken down.

It's virtually impossible to pray before (or after) Mass because of all the chatter and backslapping. The Creed is left unsaid. Homilists pander with (unfunny) jokes and (not quite the latest) pop-psychology blather. The words of the liturgy are improvised upon by politically-correct clerics and lectors with weird agendas — God our Father becomes "God our Parent," the Son of God becomes the "Child of God," etc. And we must clap, clap, clap for the band and the liturgical dancers and the clowns — we aren't making a joyful noise unto the Lord, but only unto the (amateurish) entertainers.

In many parishes the primary purpose of the Mass has been transformed from receiving Christ and worshiping the Almighty into "celebrating community" — i.e., celebrating our wonderful selves. One influential liturgical "expert" has said the Mass shouldn't convey "a feeling of infinity or eternity or the world beyond," for it's really about "communal sensitivity" among parishioners. But touchie-feelie Catholicism — where the Sign of Peace seems to be the high point of the Mass — has no power or magnetism. Not many people get out of bed on Sunday morning in search of warm huggies.

Catholics who are alienated by trivialized or freakish Masses — who are sick of being guinea pigs in a liturgical lab — often jump ship for an Evangelical church, or just stay in bed. Indeed, church attendance among Catholics has dropped from 70%, just before the liturgical experiments began, to 25% today! And today, two out of three Catholics don't believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist — which isn't surprising, given that *how* we worship has a profound effect on *what* we believe about the meaning of the Mass.

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EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ART DIRECTOR
H. Ward Sterett

DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis, George Garrett, Paul Gottfried, J.O. Tate, Michael Washburn, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Bill Kauffman, Donald Livingston, William Mills, William Murchison, Andrei Navrozov, Jacob Neusner

FOREIGN AFFAIRS EDITOR
Srdja Trifkovic

LEGAL AFFAIRS EDITOR
Stephen B. Presser

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

EDITORIAL SECRETARY
Leann Dobbs

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On the Futility of Politics

I look forward to reading Sam Francis in each issue of *Chronicles* and rarely have a major quibble with his analysis of politics and public policy. However, in his otherwise thorough and accurate critique of the Buchanan campaign ("Revolt of the 300-Pound Beefy Guys," *Principalities & Powers*, February), he includes a sentence that could be misunderstood as suggesting Pat might have a chance at winning the presidency. Sam writes, "One major value of the Buchanan campaign, especially since his move to the Reform Party, is not so much that it might win the presidency this year as that it offers a very real opportunity to build a serious, mass-based political party able to compete for—and eventually to win—power on a national scale . . ."

Sadly, no candidate outside the Incumbent Party has a chance at winning the presidency or even to win "power on a national scale." The elector selection rules have been changed so many times that it now is virtually impossible for any candidate other than a Democrat or Republican to win. In all but two states, Maine and Nebraska, all electors go to the winner of the popular vote in that state. The real presidential election takes place on a Monday in December when each state's electors gather at their capitols and cast a vote over which they have no control. The ballots are already typed and the electors just sign their names. An elector would be subject to arrest were he even to try to vote for a candidate other than the one who carried his state. Lincoln would have loved it!

Contrary to what many people believe, Ross Perot's two campaigns had no effect on the presidential elections of 1992 and 1996. Bill Clinton won 70 percent of the electors in both elections. Perot won zero electors, even though he garnered 20 million popular votes in 1992.

"But," people protest, "we have to do something to stop them, don't we?" Yes, we do, but why don't we do something really effective? For example, let's use all the money and effort that Pat Buchanan, Gary Bauer, and Howard Phillips will expend in the 2000 campaign to get children out of government schools. While we're at it, let's take all the money and effort expended every year by James Dobson, Phyllis Schlafly, Pat Robertson, *et al.*, and use that to fund private Christian schools and provide scholarships for the poor. If no children showed up at Baal Elementary and Moloch Middle School in August, that would be a real threat to Leviathan. The Buchanan campaign is no threat to the Incumbent Party.

—*J. Michael Brown*
Tulsa, OK

On the Summer School

I would like to give you and your readers some reasons why I am attending The Rockford Institute's Summer School again this year—and bringing my husband!

The reading lists are outstanding, and I must admit that, despite my education, I have not been exposed to these writers. The reading itself was very enjoyable—I could truly appreciate why these works are considered great literature.

The faculty and staff not only made intellectually stimulating presentations, but were personable, accessible, and genuinely enjoyed what they were doing. I particularly enjoyed their evident collegiality and good humor.

For anyone overly exposed to academia and its inflated sense of self-importance, the Summer School is an oasis in the desert.

Thinking people from many walks of life were brought together in friendship and camaraderie—faculty and students. "Professional identity" was secondary to the development of relationships among students and faculty. This probably has to do with the fact that most of us seriously question what is going on in the dominant culture.

The emphasis that the Summer School placed on local community encouraged me to go home and do likewise—to find a local Michigan coffee company (not just Starbucks), to seek out the local USGS topographical map of two rivers nearest my home (in metro Detroit), and to choose a membership in the Detroit Zoological Society rather than an out-of-town zoo (because it's better to support that which is nearby than that which is cheap).

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The Rockford Institute's Summer School provides an opportunity for informal professional development, intellectual challenge, lively conversation, and the cultivation of relationships with like-minded people.

Thank you so much for all of the effort you put into it, and for your warm hospitality.

—*Lisa Morgan*
Redford, MI

On Praise and Blame

J.O. Tate's jovial critique of Hollywood gender-benders ("Unisex Multiplex," *Views*, February) provides a great overview of the problems with ostensibly innocuous entertainment. As an admirer of the Coen brothers' films, I would only add to Professor Tate's discussion of *The Big Lebowski* that the film, in addition to being a wicked parody of Raymond Chandler, also mordantly depicts nihilism through the Germanic trio that harasses "The Dude" (Jeff Bridges). In one of the more hilarious scenes in recent years, one of the nihilists bleats, "Iss not fair!" To which John Goodman's character retorts, "Fair? Who's the f---ing nihilist around here!" Strike a blow against sanctimony!

That said, Professor Tate's essay contains one minor error: Tyne Daly was Harry Callahan's partner in *The Enforcer*, not *Sudden Impact*. Incidentally, Dirty Harry makes a comment in *The Enforcer* that complements Professor Tate's essay. When one of the mayor's stuffy feminist staff informs Callahan that "His Honor intends to broaden the areas of participation for women in the police force," the irreverent inspector observes, "Well, that sounds very stylish"—a perfect assessment and dismissal of the radical chic so intertwined with feminism.

—*Myles Kantor*
Boynton Beach, FL

While I enjoy *Chronicles*, I was a bit surprised to see Siobhan McKenna's name mentioned along with "Hillary and Rosie and Madonna and Riot Grrrls . . ." in your February issue ("It's a Girl's, Girl's, Girl's, Girl's World," *Views*).

The late Siobhan McKenna was the first lady of Irish theater. Her film credits include *Dr. Zhivago* and *King of Kings*. I had the pleasure of seeing her on stage in San Francisco a few years before she died. She certainly had little in common with the other women on the list.

Is it possible that Marian Kester Coombs was thinking of Sinead O'Connor and simply got her Irish lasses confused? I trust that this was an honest mistake which your fact-checker simply failed to catch.

—*Siobhan Semmett*
Dayton, OH

The Editors Reply:

When it rains, it pours. We regret the errors and thank our readers for calling them to our attention.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT, many had hoped, would use this term to clarify constitutional law and move jurisprudence somewhat closer to the original understanding of the Constitution. The Court has yet to issue important opinions regarding school vouchers, partial-birth abortion, the Violence Against Women Act, and prayer at high school football games, but the latest First Amendment decision to be released has sent an alarming signal.

It's my duty as *Chronicles*' legal affairs editor to interpret the Court's decisions for you, and part of that job is to predict how the Court will rule. In an earlier article, I indicated that the Supremes would probably nix the University of Wisconsin's policy of using mandatory student fees to subsidize ideological speech, but I've been proved wrong—and by a nine to zero vote, no less. I'm not alone, however. The Wisconsin Federal District Court judge who first heard the case got it wrong, too, as did the three judges on the panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. All opined that mandatory student fees of this type were "coerced speech" and therefore impermissible under the First Amendment.

Previous Supreme Court decisions had held that non-union teachers could not be compelled to pay "service fees" that teachers' unions use to fund political activities, and that lawyers who are compelled to join state bar associations could prevent their dues from being used to fund such activities. In both cases, the Court ruled that the political activities were not "germane" to the purpose of the organization in question (collective bargaining, in the case of teachers' unions; "regulating the legal profession and improving the quality of legal services," in the case of bar associations).

The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, following these precedents, observed that the mandatory fee program funded such student organizations as the Wisconsin Student Public Interest Research Group; the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Campus Center; the UW Greens; the Madison Aids Support Network; the International Socialist Organization; and the Ten Percent Society. These groups, the Seventh Circuit noted, lobbied Congress and the Wisconsin legislature, developed voter guides, supported bills to limit mining in Wisconsin, promoted Ralph Nader's Green Party candidacy for president, and even advocated the overthrow of the "capitalist system." The Seventh Circuit concluded, "germaneness cannot be read so broadly as to include forced funding of private political and ideological groups."

Thus the district and appellate courts upheld the challenge brought by conservative students who objected to being required to underwrite ideological positions with which they disagreed. Perhaps the courts thought that it is the job of a university to educate students, not to force them to make contributions to ideological causes. Given precedent and the dubious nature and educational value of the compelled "speech" at issue, I predicted that the highest court in the land would concur. But no.

Said Mr. Justice Kennedy, writing for the Supreme Court, "To insist upon asking what speech is germane would be contrary to the very goal the University seeks to pursue. It is not for the Court to say what is or is not germane to the ideas to be pursued in an institution of higher learning." Elaborating, Justice Kennedy indicated that "The University may determine that its mission is well served if students have the means to engage in dynamic discussions of philosophical, religious, scientific, social, and political subjects in their extracurricular campus life

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outside the lecture hall. If the University reaches this conclusion, it is entitled to impose a mandatory fee to sustain an open dialogue to these ends."

Justice Kennedy's opinion did imply that a university could still run afoul of the First Amendment if it did not exercise "viewpoint neutrality" when funding student political action groups. His message to the plaintiff students was apparently to request funding to combat offensive speech with speech more to their liking; if they were still denied funding, then they could come back to the federal courts. A century and a half ago, when Chief Justice John Marshall decided the Dartmouth College case, he prevented the New Hampshire legislature from interfering with the college because he thought that it would be wrong for institutions of higher learning to become embroiled in partisan politics. Marshall's successors seem to believe that partisan politics is more or less "the very goal the University seeks to pursue."

— *Stephen B. Presser*

VLADIMIR PUTIN's presidential election victory on March 26 was hailed by businessmen both East and West as a new beginning for economic reform in Russia. One German executive praised what he called Putin's "open, friendly attitude" to investors, while others longed for Putin to become a Russian Pinochet, a strongman who would use an "iron fist" to force reform. The "national patriots," the loose alliance of communists and nationalists who had decried the "anti-people" regime of the Yeltsin years, are in a state of shock. The People's Patriotic Union has all but dissolved, some of its members having opted to back Putin rather than the coalition's candidate, Communist Party leader Gennadi Zyuganov. Zyuganov himself campaigned quite cautiously, rarely criticizing Putin personally, appearing satisfied that he had somehow kept the party together. After all, Putin's actions in Chechnya, his talking back to the West, and his promises of law and order made him a difficult target for the "patriots." The Russian public sees the confident, even cocky, little man as their best hope for the rebirth of a great Russia.

There are, however, some facts that will likely queer the pitch of any Russian leader with visions of a rebirth of Russian greatness dancing in his head. For instance, there can be no rebirth of a great Russia without the birth of Russians. On March 22, the Russian State Statistics Committee issued a report on the "socioeconomic situation" in the Russian Federation and the situation is not good. In January 2000, there were 195,500 deaths and 93,900 births. (The numbers were 178,200 and 94,500 in January 1999). Thus, the mortality rate was nearly 11 percent higher than one year ago, and the birthrate continues to drop. According to the report, "the natural decrease in population (the number by which deaths exceed births) stood at 103,600 in January 2000, compared to 83,700 in January 1999, which means that this index grew by 23.8 %." Meanwhile, the number of marriages decreased by five percent in the past year (54,300 in January 2000, compared to 57,200 one year ago) and the number of divorces increased by 23 percent (44,400 compared to 36,000). Life expectancy for Russian men has dipped below 60, alcoholism is rampant, and drug abuse is increasing, as is the incidence of suicide and abortion. The army is having difficulty finding enough healthy conscripts to fill its already understaffed units, while the cream of the Russian military is disappearing as casualties mount in Chechnya.

Russia, to make a long story short, looks like an exhausted, aging, sick coun-

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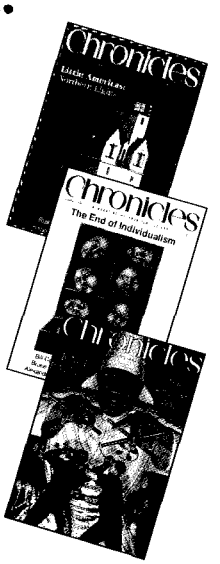

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try, a country which borders both the Muslim world (where birthrates are much higher) and a China of over a billion people, which is just beginning to flex its economic, political, and military muscles. Demographically speaking, Russia is a country in decline, and it appears unlikely, if not impossible, that any leader can hope to man Russian industry (or the Russian army) and realize the "rebirth" of a country whose people are not even reproducing themselves. Meanwhile, Russia's porous borders are being violated daily by Islamic holy warriors in the south and Chinese migrants in Siberia, as well as hosts of Third World migrants who use Russia as a transit point to the West. All have brought more crime, disease, and instability with them. Without a spiritual and moral awakening—a prospect which even Putin, the "patriots," and the Orthodox Church barely mention—to renew Russian confidence, there will not be any kind of social, much less economic or military, rebirth in Russia. The decadent West, troubled by many of the same problems, should take note.

—*Denis Petrov*

PRESIDENT PUTIN is inheriting a mess. After almost a decade of Boris Yeltsin, Russia is reduced to a neocolonial wreck with collapsing birthrates, moribund industry, and a fractured body politic. A narrow stratum of robber barons, who do not give a hoot for the country or its people, are busy squandering Russia's still ample resources in return for huge profits that are subsequently spent in Western casinos or invested in Western banks.

The rest suffer. The grim orderliness of the era of "real" socialism has given way to a mix of brazen consumerism at the top and abject poverty everywhere else, a mix usually encountered in more moderate climes. Gold-chromed Grand Cherokees speed past the crumbling façades of dreadful 1960's tower blocks; pitiful babushkas beg ("for the sake of Christ, for thy soul . . . ") right outside flashy boutiques selling the latest Parisian designer collections. At the Bolshoi bar, between acts, German businessmen smugly buy half-bottles of the sweet Modovan champagne for their pretty Russian escorts, at least two decades their junior.

The country is in disarray! This is the wail heard in very different quarters. It is repeated in elegant *nouveau-riche* apartments on the Arbat (icons on the wall, Italian furniture, Japanese stereo, and platitudes about the market economy and Western-style democracy) and in the smoke-filled office of the Union of Writers (samovar and vodka, piles of books and newspapers; the search for the Meaning of Russia continues). The disarray is there, all right, but few of those offering such diagnosis can suggest a therapy.

Angry old men, predictably enough, want to "shoot them all" ("they" being not only the unpleasant Grand Cherokee drivers, but just about everyone under 60). This tried and tested Russian recipe stops short of step two: Then what? The lack of a viable program that would promise more than a better yesterday is the bane of the Communists. They never presented a credible alternative: a dour lot they are, those recycled apparatchiks with balding pates and bulging waists, nostalgic for their cozy world of dachas, chauffeur-driven Volgas, and special stores for the elite. Their promises of a better yesterday worked with the multimillion army of impoverished pensioners, but they are devoid of real ideas and solutions.

Earnest yuppified technocrats, on the other hand, with their Foreign Language Institute English and their hopes of American scholarships, parrot the New-World-Order-speak of radical free market reforms, of democratic institutions and "Europe." Chubais was their man, of course, but they still hope to capture Putin's attention. "Inevitable," they say, in view of Russia's financial dire straits. They do not understand the globalist music, much less its full implications, but they like its sound. Their inferiority complex *vis-à-vis* "the West" has given us Kozyrev's disastrous foreign policy and the IMF-style reform of the early Yeltsin years. Their abject failure will never be accepted, much less examined. They are the janissaries of the West, and they believe that their time will come. They do not say it, but they remember that Marxism itself was a Western import into Russia's body politic, enthroned with the aid of non-indigenous forces and the support of "progressives" the world over. They still control the Foreign Ministry (MID) bureaucracy and want to continue the policy of appeasing Washington in the former Yugoslavia, often to the exasperation of other elements in the power structure. Their approach—based on the rhetoric of "post-Cold War cooperation"—overlooks the new Evil Empire's character and agenda.

Putin's first task should be to clean the stables and establish where Russia stands in the new international order. In many Russians' minds, last year's Kosovo crisis was the last moment to start doing so, but under Yeltsin it could not be done. The former Yugoslavia is now seen as the test case of Russia's relations with the Western world for decades to come. Many see NATO in Tuzla and Pristina as the herald of NATO in Latvia, Estonia, or the Ukraine. It is now suspected in Moscow that there have always been people in Washington—such as Zbigniew Brzezinski—who regarded Russia, rather than the Soviet Union, as the enemy. They should be forced to declare their intentions.

That will not be enough to get Russia back on its feet, however. Across the ideological spectrum patriotic intellectuals warn that, without moral and spiritual renewal, Russia cannot be saved. And yet, when asked about the practical scenario for making this happen, they display an almost oriental fatalism: It may happen, but only by a miracle. When pressed, Russia's foremost mathematician and thinker, Igor Shafarevich, admits that, "as a scientist," he sees no grounds for recovery "in the foreseeable future." As an Orthodox Christian, however, he believes that the Holy Spirit may intervene in ways unexpected and mysterious.

In the meantime, nine-tenths of the people have no time to ponder any macro-issues. They are too busy struggling to make ends meet, and this many of them miraculously manage even though, statistically, most of the population is below what is considered the poverty line in the "developed" world. Russia's Western "partners" are making sure that she will not belong to that world for a very long time. The economy has been effectively reduced to neocolonial status: Russia's natural resources, such as natural gas, oil, rare metals, precious stones, and timber, are traded for Western consumer goods and industrial products. There are hefty profits there for the state-approved *mafiosi* who control the process of exchange, which may explain their reluctance to contemplate any fundamental change in the power structure. Under Putin, they want more Yeltsin.

After Yeltsin, Russia must reexplore political reality in the big, wide world. More importantly, regardless of Putin's ultimate intentions, it is at least possible that Russia's recovery—and self-discov-

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ery—may commence. As long as the misshapen drunk was lord of the Kremlin, that was not in the cards.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH used to offer salvation—on the inevitable silver-filigreed platter from Tiffany's, served up with a spot of sherry and proffered with immaculate taste and manners.

A rougher-hewn brand of salvation—for the church itself, or failing that, a viable form of traditional Anglicanism—is now on offer in the United States. No silver platters, but lots of old-style religion. And its most incongruous, yet heartening, feature: African and Asian oversight.

Yes, the churches of Rwanda—of all seemingly God-forsaken places—and Southeast Asia, are running to the rescue of traditional Episcopalians bereft of reliable spiritual leadership and confronted with the likelihood that their church this summer, at General Convention, will validate the whole gay rights agenda.

On January 30, in Singapore, Rwandan and Singaporean archbishops, assisted by retired bishops from South Carolina and Tennessee as well as a Chilean prelate, consecrated two stoutly orthodox American priests as bishops. Bishops of what? Of no necessary place—and of any that might become necessary. The two—John Rodgers and Charles H. Murphy, III—are missionary bishops to the United States.

To the *United States*? What about all the good old ivy-covered Episcopal churches to be found in this country? Ah, that's just it. Episcopalians have the churches without the tough, uncompromising faith that an earlier generation of Episcopal missionary bishops brought to a brand-new America.

A church whose most famous bishop is the staunchly heretical (and newly retired) John Shelby Spong, and which has become famous for its frantic accommodations to the secular culture, stands badly in need of some godly competition. Such competition it now will receive through the good and holy offices—if such they prove, and the prospects for that seem extraordinary—of Bishops Rodgers and Murphy.

So how did the Africans and Southeast Asians get in on this thing? The 1998 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops—held not at Lambeth Palace, in London, but at Canterbury—threw into alliance conservative bishops from the United States, England, Africa, Australia, Asia, and South America. Old regional, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic differences receded into triviality. What mattered was the Gospel of Jesus Christ. American, British, and Canadian church leaders, swept away by feminist and gay concerns, looked on aghast at what their coreligionists thought of their theology.

A major irony: Africa is where the church is growing, not to say burgeoning; in the United States and Europe, it shrinks. American Episcopalians, the last time anyone toted this up, were barely more numerous (2.4 million) than American Muslims. African bishops, with little money but enormous congregations and the equally enormous task in areas like Nigeria of competing successfully with militant Islam, are especially keen to maintain the Christian moral tone. This means—never mind what American churchmen may say—rejection of the gay-rights agenda.

The Canterbury conference strongly affirmed the ideals of scriptural authority and heterosexual monogamy. America's angry, outvoted bishops went home determined to do as they liked, never mind what the vast majority of worldwide Anglicans might say. Their dioceses declined to endorse the Lambeth resolutions. Bishops said in so many words that, if the Holy Spirit (an endlessly flexible and permissive Being, in liberal ecclesiology) led them to ordain gays, they would do so.

A little of this went a long way with the bishops they were criticizing, implicitly or explicitly. When, to their own vexations, the overseas bishops added the plight and pleas of sorely vexed traditional Episcopalians, the temptation to act was overwhelming.

Some conservatives regard the Singapore consecrations as precipitate and injurious to the cause they supposedly serve. But consider the delights and pleasures the action affords: overdue recognition of the United States, and its quasi-pagan society, as a missionary field; racial reconciliation at the highest level—a spiritual one—through white American obedience to brown and black bishops whose skin color and manner of speaking English matter not at all as compared with their courage and spiritual fidelity.

American parishes have already begun to affiliate formally with the overseas bishops who performed the consecrations. Anglicanism—which despite, or maybe because of, its vast influence, lacks unique doctrines and certain means of enforcement—is splitting apart. And this could be just the beginning. World Christianity would seem to be realigning itself—the religion of the Bible over against the religion (such as it is) of the editorial pages and talk shows and college seminars. Into the closet goes the old silver-filigreed platter. Who cares? It's what's actually on the platter that counts—right?

—*William Murchison*

BOOK OF NEXT MONTH

John T. Flynn was a feisty and ruthlessly honest journalist who had the great honor of being kicked out of both the *New Republic* and *National Review*. In his masterwork, *As We Go Marching* (1944), Flynn anatomized the fascism of our war-time enemies, Germany and Italy, and found that the "essential principles of fascism"—militarism, a debt-supported state, the bureaucratization of industry and society—had begun to define Mr. Roosevelt's America as well. Flynn prophesied that the "dark road upon which we have set our feet as we go marching to the salvation of the world" leads to national socialism. Are we there yet?

OBITER DICTA: Lawrence Dugan, a librarian who lives in Philadelphia, has contributed two new poems this month. Mr. Dugan's poetry has appeared in numerous national and international publications, including the *New Republic*, *Southern Review*, the *Spectator*, *Encounter*, *Commonweal*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Irish Edition*, *Poetry Australia*, and, most recently, *First Things*.

Our artist this month, **Darren Gygi**, has been illustrating magazines for over three years. A lifelong student of caricature, Mr. Gygi resides in Utah with his wife, Megan. More samples of his work can be found in his online portfolio, *www.theispot.com/artist/gygi*.

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Darren Gygi

Why Don't We Mind Our Own Business?

by Thomas Fleming

"You can fool some of the people all of the time," said W.C. Fields quoting Lincoln, "and those odds are good enough for me." Fields also said that, in a presidential election, he never voted *for* anyone, only against, and this time around contrarians could have, well, a Field day, since George W. Bush and Al Gore have joined forces to snooker the American people on virtually every subject, from taxes to education to foreign policy. They both agreed, for example, that the American people were morally obliged to violate U.S., Cuban, and international laws by stealing a six-year-old Cuban boy from his father.

Why should we be surprised? Both parties have also agreed that it is right to murder Iraqi and Serbian children to express our disapproval of the governments that are making their lives miserable. The two Catholic candidates in the race, Patrick Buchanan and Joseph Sobran, have seen through the bad logic (and bad faith) that has turned the United States into the leading terrorist nation on the planet, but neither can see that the same puritanical busybodying is at work in the Elian Gonzalez case. There is still hope for Joe and Pat: I can remember when they were both what they would now call war-mongering imperialists, and they have grown out of that phase.

The underlying fallacy in the Elian Gonzalez case is that Americans somehow owe the rest of the world something—a chance for freedom, a higher standard of living, access to reruns of *McHale's Navy*. If you listen to the official voices of our cultural life—church, television, schools, magazines, even what we now call the arts—each one of us now has moral and political obligations that connect us with starving villagers in Peru, rebels in Afghanistan, aborted girl children in China.

For most of us, these obligations can only be discharged by giving support to international charity. The spirit of international humanitarianism was best described by the president of the Rockefeller Foundation who, in 1937, lauded the "men who never thought in terms of flag or boundary lines and who never served a lesser loyalty than the welfare of mankind."

Most people in the United States (although by no means all) acknowledge some responsibility to make charitable contributions out of their surplus and abundance. But how much to give, to whom, and how—those are questions to which there are no easy or obvious answers, although some philosophers and theologians have made it sound as if there were. All men are brothers, say the theologians, and Christians have an obligation to play good Samaritan everywhere and at all times. From each according to his abilities, to each according to his need, say philosophers on the left. We are positively obligated to do anything we can to alleviate suffering "without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance." Proximity or friendship might once have counted for something, but (as Peter Singer put it) "instant communication and swift transportation have changed the situation," because the "global village" has made "an important, though still unrecognized difference to our moral situation."

The global village is a powerful image that makes everyone each other's next door neighbor. If a neighbor's house burned down in the middle of winter, it would be worse than uncharitable to refuse to take in the family and provide them with food and warm clothing: It would be unjust. In the world of international philanthropy, the same argument applies to all of the global village.

Do not imagine that citizens of a global village can take refuge in the right to dispose of their own property. Two centuries ago, William Godwin argued in *Political Justice* (the classic text of modern liberalism) that a wealthy man is obligated to

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share his wealth: "So far from being entitled to well earned applause, for having employed some scanty pittance in the service of philanthropy, he is in the eye of justice a delinquent, if he withhold any portion from that service." Godwin was addressing his argument only to the people of England, but if there are sound moral reasons for redistributing wealth within a society, then the same or similar arguments can be used to justify redistribution between societies.

In adopting this point of view, internationalists can no longer consider themselves American or French or Croat. They are citizens of the world, and their neighborhoods are linked by computers, fax machines, and mass media into a universal consciousness that feels "a special providence in the fall of a sparrow."

In the secularized vision of the human brotherhood, as it is represented by international agencies for relief and development, all the world's resources should be shared by all the world's peoples collaborating for the common good. The obstacles to fulfilling this dream are not lack of resources, the culture of Third World nations, or even common human frailty. Former World Bank President Robert McNamara points the finger at provincial pride, ethnic resentments, localism, and nationalism—all of which stand in the way of global justice:

> There are no material obstacles to a sane, manageable, and progressive response to the world's development needs. The obstacle lies in the minds of men. . . . Too many millennia of tribal suspicion and hostility are still at work in our subconscious minds. But what human society can ultimately survive without a sense of community? Today we are in fact an inescapable community, united by the forces of communication and interdependence in our new technological order. The conclusion is inevitable: we must apply at the world level that same moral responsibility, that same sharing of wealth, that same standard of justice and compassion, without which our own national societies will surely fall apart.

The underlying conception of global philanthropy is that of the national welfare state applied internationally. Because of injustices committed by previous generations of Europeans, the current inhabitants of developed nations are positively obligated, according to dozens of declarations, charters, and manifestos, to promote (in the words of one internationalist commission) "the economic and social progress of all countries, especially developing countries."

The language of international justice and development is not confined to congresses of Third World leaders; it is the everyday language of World Bank presidents and American secretaries of state. And while we as individuals have little (if any) power over the decisions made by national and international leaders, we are expected to pay taxes and abide by declarations in ways that may increasingly intrude upon private life.

This international concern with individuals (now expressed as "international human rights") has two sides. Most obviously, it includes the various U.N. declarations on human rights and children's rights, which implicitly take precedence over national sovereignty and national legislation. A child mistreated or neglected in Detroit may now become the concern, not just of the United Nations, but of the member nations and (presumably) of the citizens of those member nations, and a Cuban custody battle can be turned into an international incident.

Humanitarian globalists always boast of their accomplishments when they are demanding relief for Rwanda or proposing an international tax to redistribute the goods of the developed North to the developing South. They prefer not to mention how much of the money sent by Western nations is squandered by inefficient and corrupt organizations, both public and private. In his book *The Lords of Poverty*, Graham Hancock has documented the waste, fraud, and mismanagement of the "international aid business." His indictment takes in the United Nations and Red Cross officials who administer relief while living in luxury hotels; religious organizations (such as International Christian Aid and World Vision) whose "overhead" costs can exceed 50 percent; and the record of rotting food, inoperative equipment, and unusable (sometimes potentially lethal) medicines that have been inflicted upon the objects of international charity.

What, for example, has been the effect of the World Bank upon the Third World countries it has attempted to "develop"? Anyone who is willing to take upon himself the unpleasant task of reading through the annual addresses Robert McNamara made while World Bank president will soon notice a pattern of recurring themes. In speech after speech, Mr. McNamara lauded the World Bank's "very impressive record of development," while at the same time conceding that the Bank had failed either to close the gap between rich and poor nations or to reduce poverty. In 1970, McNamara declared war on the tribal mentality, and three years later in Nairobi he unveiled a new plan of attack against "absolute poverty," setting specific goals for small farm production as well as establishing a program of institutional reforms in the poorest nations. In 1976, admitting that "poverty tends to perpetuate itself," he outlined his new battle plan of "intervention . . . designed and launched against its dynamics." However, in the very next year, the president confessed that "in retrospect it is clear that too much confidence was based on the belief that rapid economic growth would ultimately result in the reduction of poverty."

Both capitalist and socialist critics have held the World Bank responsible for at least some of the economic and agricultural disasters that have overtaken many poor nations in recent decades. In the capitalist critique, easy money has encouraged Third World countries to engage in reckless spending on money-losing projects, to discourage the start-up of profitable and productive businesses, and to undertake the sort of centralized economic planning and controls that have failed everywhere they have been tried.

Tanzania is the African nation that has been the recipient of the largest amount of foreign aid and has been frequently described as Robert McNamara's pet project, and former President Julius Nyrere was frequently held up as a model African ruler. But despite massive infusions of aid from the World Bank and from Scandinavian countries throughout the 1970's, growth in agriculture and in industry actually slowed in 1978-79. By 1979, even President Nyrere was admitting his defeat on all fronts, and in 1990, worn out by his well-subsidized efforts to create a socialist state, he resigned in despair from all politics.

Similar stories can be told of Mozambique or Mexico or Somalia. The 1992 U.N./U.S. invasion of Somalia was undertaken, according to the American press, with the purest motives ever known for a military action: undiluted altruism. Months before President Bush decided to send in the Marines, he and the rest of the country had been subjected to pictures of starving

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Somalis on the evening news. The whole affair, from first to last, was a political melodrama, and no one should have been surprised by the cameras and klieg lights covering the Marine landing.

Were the Somalis suffering because the West had neglected to send them aid? On the contrary, it is far more likely that our aid made the trouble in the first place. In fact, the United States and other Western nations had heavily subsidized the crumbling regime with lavish annual donations. By 1987, debt-service obligations were 167 percent of Somalia's $130 million export earnings—as opposed to $400 million in foreign aid. Somalia was, in fact, the recipient of America's largest aid program in sub-Saharan Africa.

Not all the dollars spent, however, went to feed starving Somalis. USAID workers were said to live on a lavish scale with a 25 percent bonus for serving in a hardship country. Provided with all the amenities—luxury hotels, beach clubs, fine restaurants—the Western aid workers failed to deliver relief in 1987, partly because of interagency bickering among the representatives of USAID, UNICEF, Oxfam, WHO, etc. Little had improved by 1992, and at the time of the American invasion, the *Washington Post* recounted how 15 people a day were dying of thirst in one settlement because the UNHCR office was haggling with a local contractor over the price of putting in a well.

If international relief, governmental or professional, is by and large a failure, the humane person does have other options. He might, for example, practice charity closer to home, where it is possible to become personally involved and where it is much easier to monitor the honesty and effectiveness of relief programs. Mother Teresa, when a Milwaukee woman volunteered to come and assist her in India, told the woman to do good in her own hometown, to find Calcutta in Milwaukee.

Charity does begin at home, and the burden of charity is most easily discharged toward those with whom we are already connected by bonds of blood and experience. Charity toward strangers requires effort, and the more foreign the stranger, the greater the effort required. I am speaking, now, of that natural charity, which grows and expands with the maturing conscience of the individual, in distinction from what is generally known as "compassion," the artificial sense of benevolence we are taught to feel in doing good deeds by long distance. In this case, the reverse is true. People who will not take a bowl of soup to a sick neighbor will weep over the fate of starving Albanians whose pictures they have seen on television.

All these goals are laudable in themselves, and worthy men and women may well choose to devote themselves to pursuing the welfare of foreigners as a sort of special vocation, but what seems to be far more common is the telescopic philanthropy of Dickens' Mrs. Jellaby, whose eyes—so farsighted that "they could see nothing nearer than Africa"—overlooked the needs of children, friends, and neighbors. One American thinker put the whole problem in a nutshell: "Why don't you mind your own business, 'cause if you'd mind your business, then you won't be minding mine."

So we see today, people who neglect their own children—send them to public schools and give them unrestricted access to TV—are getting teary-eyed over a Cuban kid they will never meet. A famous Unionist judge in Charleston once remarked that South Carolina was too small to be a nation and too big to be a lunatic asylum. The United States today has apparently grown too big to be a nation, but it is still a lunatic asylum.

c

DICTATIONS

Charity Versus Foreign Aid

"Charity begins at home" strikes the modern ear as a contradiction in terms. In our time, charity has come to mean giving to strangers—the stranger the better. It is a duty that we discharge by writing a check or typing a credit card number into our favorite charity's website. (By the way, that address is *www.chroniclesmagazine.org*.) How can it be charitable to give something to my wife and children or even to my cousins or neighbors?

When we forget the meaning of words, it is small wonder if we no longer recognize the thing itself. "Charity" comes from the Latin *caritas*, which meant something like "dearness," "fondness," "affection." St. Jerome used it to translate St. Paul's Greek word, *agape*, the deep affection we are to have for each other in imitation of Christ's perfect love for us. As St. Augustine put it, charity is the "virtue which joins us to God in love," and it is, as St. Paul tells us, a greater gift of the spirit even than faith.

As a gift of the Holy Spirit, charity connects us with God. St. Thomas tells us that, rather than lavish our wealth on the evil (e.g., thieves, confidence men, and child molesters), we should do the greatest good to those who are closest to God. Quoting Paul's dictum that "Charity dealeth not perversely," he points out that "to do good deeds to certain persons is to act perversely. . . . Therefore, since kindness is an act of charity, we ought not to be kind to everyone." From this perspective of grace, then, much of the do-gooding time and effort spent on drug dealers, thugs, and child molesters is not only misguided, but perverse.

However, from the natural perspective, as Thomas says, closeness to ourselves must also affect the degree of our charity: "In what concerns nature we should love our kinsmen most, . . . and we are more closely bound to provide them with necessities of life." In other words, charity does begin at home and radiates outward to the broader spheres of our kinfolk, friends, neighbors, and fellow citizens before it is exhausted in the general sea of humanity.

Philanthropists who speak of a general duty to the world do not understand the problem of scarcity. "Since one cannot help everyone," said Augustine, "one has to be concerned with those who by reason of place, time, or circumstances, are by some chance more tightly bound to you."

A Christian saint who had the power to do everyone good would obviously exercise it (within the limits set forth by Thomas), but such power belongs to the divine and not to the human. Charity obliges us to be kind to those who are attached to us and to relieve the deserving poor who come our way. Universal charity is impossible even for the wealthiest individuals or governments in the world; in attempting to practice it, we become morally numb to the obligations of everyday life. International philanthropy is evil.

—Humpty Dumpty

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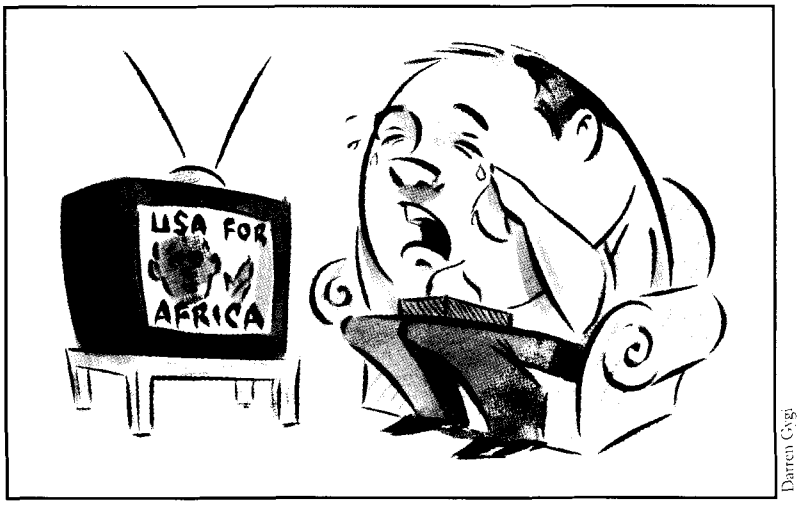
Down the Rathole

Where Foreign Aid Goes

by Doug Bandow



Darren Gygi

Last year, President Clinton, who has rarely found a conflict that he did not want to join, complained to the Veterans of Foreign Wars that Congress was cutting foreign aid, "the very programs designed to keep our soldiers out of war in the first place." He threatened to veto the foreign-assistance appropriation bills passed by the House and Senate, which had reduced his request by two billion dollars. Naturally, Congress capitulated, throwing more good money after bad. What is a few billion among friends for programs which have consistently failed?

The pattern is likely to be repeated this year. The administration has proposed spending $22.8 billion next year on international affairs, including the cost of manning the State Department, subsidizing the United Nations, and funding international conferences and commissions. Roughly $12.2 billion is slated for "international assistance programs."

Where does it all go? There is three billion dollars for "international development assistance," which falls under the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). More than one billion dollars is for general aid; separate funds have been established to aid Africa, respond to disasters, and combat disease. Another $1.5 billion is for the former Soviet bloc. All of this money is supposed to encourage economic growth, democratic development, environmental protection, population reduction, and a variety of other worthy ends. In addition, USAID costs about $500 million to run.

Small amounts of money go to such agencies as the Peace Corps and the Inter-American Foundation. But the administration also wants to spend $3.1 billion on the African Development Foundation in order to "generate new jobs, protect Africa's environment, and strengthen basic democratic values and civil society."

The potpourri of multilateral aid institutions—the World Bank; the International Monetary Fund; regional banks for Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America; and more—will consume another $2.1 billion. Finally, more than $800 million is slated for Food for Peace, which subsidizes foreign agricultural shipments (and U.S. farmers) in the name of feeding the world.

Security assistance, largely administered by the Pentagon, accounts for almost seven billion dollars. About $4.3 billion goes to subsidize U.S. arms sales abroad; another $420 million is slated to support peacekeeping operations and promote nonproliferation. There is also $2.3 billion doled out by USAID for the Economic Support Fund, which is essentially a cash transfer to those governments which happen to be on Washington's annual gift list. Israel is a prime recipient.

Since World War II, the United States has contributed (in current dollars) more than one trillion dollars in bilateral and multilateral assistance to other countries. Other nations and international aid agencies have provided hundreds of billions of dollars more.

What do they have to show for all of this effort? Although some individual development projects have worked and humanitarian aid can help alleviate the effects of crises, there is little evidence that American cash transfers have done much to advance growth or stability throughout the developing world. Most obviously, there is no evidence that abundant "aid" has helped move poor Third World states into the industrial age.

Even USAID has been forced to admit that "much of the in-

Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a nationally syndicated columnist. He is the author and editor of several books, including Perpetuating Poverty: The World Bank, the IMF, and the Developing World.

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vestment financed by U.S. AID and other donors between 1960 and 1980 has disappeared without a trace." The result? The United Nations reported in 1996 that 70 countries were poorer than they were in 1980; 43 were worse off than they were in 1960.

Almost all policy workers today acknowledge that good domestic policies (outward-oriented, market-friendly) are the fundamental determinants of growth. Aid officials have argued that they can induce countries to move to market economies, but foreign-aid transfers more often subsidize economic failure—witness Russia. In fact, World Bank economists Craig Burnside and David Dollar have concluded: "We find no systematic influence of aid on our index of fiscal, monetary, and trade policies." For each case where one can argue that assistance advanced reform, "there is a Zambia, in which policy deteriorated continuously from 1970 until 1993, while aid receipts rose continuously."

The failure of foreign aid to meet its traditional goals has led to a frantic search for new justifications for its continuation. The latest, articulated by President Clinton before the VFW, is that Western financial transfers can prevent social catastrophe, the implosion of entire nations, and war. Without massive transfers to the Balkans, argued Clinton, "make no mistake—there will be another bloody war."

Similarly, before he quit in July 1999, USAID Administrator J. Brian Atwood complained that budget caps on foreign aid were causing the United States to miss "opportunities to understand the internal tensions that lead a state to fail or go to war with its neighbor."

The administration has long peddled this line. In June 1994, Atwood ordered the agency to "start putting together a socio-economic and political early warning system, to identify the vulnerabilities" of weak developing states, and to "start putting some resources behind them." Calling this mission "crisis prevention," he went on to advocate "preventive investment" in "nation building." Other U.S. aid advocates, both on Capitol Hill and in the private relief community, have made much the same argument.

The U.N. high commissioner for refugees also suggested using aid to forestall crises. In 1995, Commissioner Sadako Ogata asked: "What might have happened in Rwanda if the estimated $2 billion spent on refugee relief during the first two weeks of the emergency had been devoted to keeping the peace, protecting human rights and promoting development in the period that preceded the exodus?"

The answer is "probably nothing," for Rwanda did not go unaided before its crisis. On the contrary, between 1971 and 1994, that nation received $4.7 billion in foreign assistance from America, the multilaterals, and European nations.

Then there are Haiti and Somalia, which, over the same period, received $3.1 billion and $6.2 billion, respectively. Both descended into chaos; both ended up under U.S. military occupation. So much for the President's desire to use aid to avoid military intervention.

In fact, almost every country in crisis received abundant outside transfers from a variety of sources beforehand. Over the same period, Sierra Leone received $1.8 billion in international aid, Liberia $1.8 billion, Angola $2.9 billion, Chad $3.3 billion, Burundi $3.4 billion, Uganda $5.8 billion, Zaire $8.4 billion, Sri Lanka $9.8 billion, Mozambique $10.5 billion, Ethiopia $11.5 billion, and Sudan $13.4 billion.

Contrary to the Clinton administration's claims, generous and continuous foreign aid did not prevent catastrophe in these nations. Obviously, they all suffer from a variety of ills. But in no case did inadequate international aid cause the West to miss "opportunities to understand the internal tensions that lead a state to fail or go to war with its neighbor," let alone cause those nations to fail or go to war.

None of the benefiting states was capable of using foreign capital well. In countries like Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Zaire, foreign assistance subsidized autocratic and corrupt dictators who consciously wrecked their nations. Alex De Waal, onetime vice director of Africa Watch, reports that outside assistance causes governments to shirk their responsibilities: "It is structurally bad because all forms of relief undermine the incentive to take responsibility. The more aid a country receives, the less the government of that country has to answer to the people."

Even well-intended humanitarian assistance has had perverse consequences. Concluded one internal USAID audit of Food for Peace shipments: "the long-term feeding programs in the same areas for ten years or more have great potential" for creating disincentives to "food production." Farmers in countries as diverse as Guatemala, Haiti, and India have been ruined by American kindness.

Western assistance programs had a particularly disastrous impact on Somalia, a longtime U.S. ally that self-destructed and, like Humpty-Dumpty, proved impervious to American and U.N. attempts to put it back together again. Explained Michael Maren, a journalist who has worked for the Peace Corps, Catholic Relief Services, and USAID, "the program was working to prop up a corrupt dictator and turn nomads into relief

Foley's Secretary

by Lawrence Dugan

She said whatever they told her,
Let the meanest client scold her:
"Put Foley on the phone, I pay
"To hear his nonsense once a day!"
But client slowly realizes
The girl is smart and sympathizes.
One day she says a *bit* too much,
Tells angry Mr. Such-and-Such
That company X is under fire
To make it rain—or is it drier?
"I don't know Mr. Foley's views . . . "
But client understands the news,
Shorts the stock and saves his skin,
Takes her to lunch at *Le Bec Fin*
For bending rules left unspoken.
(When they break they don't seem broken.)

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junkies." He and a number of other aid workers separately "arrived at the conclusion that the relief program was probably killing as many people as it was saving."

Advocates of aid simply argue that they will do better next time. Now that the Cold War is over, they contend, there is less pressure on Washington to offer assistance as *de facto* bribes to repressive regimes. However, the bulk of aid has always been economic, and much of it has come from multilateral lending institutions. For instance, between 1971 and 1994, the United States accounted for barely one-fifth of total assistance to Somalia. During the same period, Burundi and Rwanda received more from the International Development Association, a World Bank affiliate, than from the United States.

Aid supporters claim that they have learned their lessons and now are both more competent and selective in providing aid. Yet economists Alberto Alesina and Beatrice Weder report in a new study for the National Bureau of Economic Research that more corrupt governments tend to receive more aid.

Indeed, on the same day last summer that newspapers were reporting the President's remarks to the VFW, the *New York Times* published the results of an investigation by the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia which reviewed the effects of the $5.1 billion in aid provided to that nation (using the term loosely) since 1995. According to reporter Chris Hedges, "As much as a billion dollars has disappeared from public funds or been stolen from international aid projects through fraud carried out by the Muslim, Croatian and Serbian nationalist leaders who keep Bosnia rigidly partitioned into three ethnic enclaves."

An enraged administration responded that it was not foreign aid that was looted but Bosnia's own resources. Now there is an argument for providing more assistance! Of course, money is fungible: Foreign transfers allow a country to squander its own funds. Why should the West subsidize a system which is corrupt?

The scale of theft was staggering. For instance, in 1999, $200 million simply disappeared from the city of Tuzla's budget; $300 million had gone missing over the previous two years. Aid agencies and foreign embassies lost $20 million deposited in one Bosnian bank. Rather than reacting with outrage, Western officials feared even to discuss the problem lest it frighten "away international donors."

The investigation was conducted by the antifraud unit of the Office of the High Representative—essentially the West's dictator in Bosnia. Officials compiled a 4,000-page report and investigated 220 cases of alleged corruption and fraud. However, the official recipients of aid seemed uninterested in prosecuting wrongdoers. The high representative formally barred 15 miscreants from office, but most, reported the *Times*, retain their influence.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic dismissed the high representative's allegations. President Izetbegovic's son, Bakir, is reputed to be one of the richest men in Bosnia. Bakir Izetbegovic controls Sarajevo's City Development Institute, which determines who gets to occupy 80,000 public apartments. Members of the ruling party get preferential access, while average Bosnians complain that they have to pay a $2,000 kickback.

Western officials report that the younger Izetbegovic receives some of the extortion money extracted by Sarajevo gangsters from local businessmen. He also owns 15 percent of state-controlled Bosnia Air.

The problem is not just those who are stealing, but those who are paying. James Lyon, director of the Crisis Group, complains, "The international administrators beg, plead, cajole and in some cases engage in what looks like bribery, promising cities infrastructure projects if they allow some refugees to return." It should surprise no one if what looks like bribery ends up being treated like bribery.

Alas, the experience of Bosnia is all too common. The venality of aid recipients such as the Philippines and Zaire was legendary. Russia has sucked in more than $20 billion from the IMF alone, making a few people very rich.

The industrialized West has spent a half-century attempting to purchase self-sustaining economic development in the Third World. The policy has failed. There is no correlation between foreign assistance and economic growth, let alone evidence that aid caused the success of those few nations which have escaped poverty.

So aid advocates have developed new arguments for their programs. But the attempt to put old wine into new wineskins—to dress up yesterday's failed policies with today's new justifications—will not work. Instead, developed nations should assist poorer states by doing no harm. Washington should end government-to-government assistance, which has so often buttressed regimes dedicated to little more than maintaining power and has eased the economic pressure for needed reforms. The United States should stop meddling in foreign affairs which matter little to America; the result is usually to stir up conflict, raise expectations, and leave nations worse off than before. At the same time, the United States should improve the access of poorer states to the international marketplace—including its own. Most importantly, it should clearly state that foreign countries, not the West, ultimately control their own destinies. c

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Great Expectations

How Uncle Sam Fathers Big Families in the Third World

by Virginia Deane Abernethy

Darren Gygi

Foreign aid, like other forms of aid, is a subsidy that distorts choice. The distortion takes many forms; for example, aid is sometimes put to uses unintended by the giver; it also lets the recipient pursue activities below their real cost. Since President Harry Truman launched the foreign-aid crusade, U.S. economic aid to developing nations has totaled about $300 billion. This subsidy has encouraged other nations to make choices they might not otherwise have made.

U.S. foreign aid has been doled out for economic development in poor nations and also to military allies. However, since money is fungible, U.S. funds directed toward one purpose sometimes enable countries to pursue policies and projects that might otherwise appear unaffordable. The economic and military aid provided to Israel over several decades has directly or indirectly defrayed much of the cost of Israeli settlements in occupied territories. U.S. aid to Israel has run between three and six billion dollars annually since President Jimmy Carter signed the Camp David accords. In 2000, Israel will receive 26 percent of all U.S. foreign aid, or $4.02 billion dollars. This past winter, Israel made an additional $64 billion in U.S. aid a condition of withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Many Israelis and supporters of Israel in the United States believe that peaceful coexistence in the Middle East is impossible so long as Israel expands its settlements in occupied territories. Numerous international agreements signed by Israel since 1990 call for its withdrawal from occupied territories and an end to new settlements. Nevertheless, the view that Israel must reach an accommodation with its Muslim neighbors in order to achieve lasting security has scarcely been a deterrent to expansion. New housing construction exceeds the well-publicized demolitions of existing Israeli communities.

Settlements in the occupied territories, and their attendant security needs, are a significant drain on the Israeli treasury, even though the country is the sixth most powerful military presence and the 17th wealthiest in the world. Funds expended on settlements are not available for other desirable public uses. The competition for funds between military and expansionist programs on the one hand, and popular domestic programs on the other, would become more acute if foreign aid were reduced. The heightened awareness of the necessity to choose among desirable goods might strengthen the resolve and influence of the peace-for-land faction within Israel, whereas continuing aid at current levels probably undermines the goal of securing Israel's peaceful future.

The elimination of poverty and hunger in Third World countries is another widely shared goal that is not being achieved through current means. For half a century, quantities of aid have been funneled to the Third World through nongovernmental organizations, bilateral agreements, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund—to little effect. Need persists. The World Bank and the International Mone-

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Virginia Deane Abernethy is a professor emeritus of psychiatry at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and the author of Population Politics: The Choices that Shape Our Future *(Insight Books).*

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tary Fund have failed.

A principal reason that some areas remain mired in poverty is that populations are far larger than they were when international aid began. (Populations are still growing, although the *rate of growth* has declined.) Plots of land per farm family are significantly smaller than 50 years ago, so rural populations are often impoverished even in countries such as Thailand, where some sectors have industrialized and modernized. Ethiopia, which received massive aid in the early 1980's to alleviate mass starvation, is again in the throes of drought-induced famine—only now family plots are half their former size and population grows by three percent annually. (With a three percent rate of growth, a population doubles in 22 years.)

Third World populations get rapidly larger because fertility rates are higher and mortality rates are lower than when international aid began. No one would wish to withhold life-saving medical care, but the tragedy is that Western aid also artificially raised fertility rates (the total number of children born per woman). Why did this happen?

A widely accepted generalization is that families in all societies have approximately the number of children that they want. I have pioneered the "fertility opportunity model," which further stipulates that the desire for children is innate: Couples seize upon seemingly good opportunities to have more children. Yet family-size targets are tempered by judgments about how many children can be raised *well* given cultural and individual expectations, aspirations that entail alternate uses of resources and subjective perceptions about resource availability.

Parents generally behave as if they wanted to provide their offspring with the best possible start in life. Over the long run, a strategy of restraint combined with good timing appears to maximize reproductive success in human societies—and, indeed, in many animal species.

People rarely measure prosperity or "plenty" by what is available to them but by what they once had, what they want, what a relevant comparison group has, and what the future is expected to bring. Humanity's sense of scarcity can be overcome only for fleeting moments, until a new, higher standard of living comes to be taken for granted. After people become used to a particular level of affluence, fewer resources or even a slower pace of acquiring wealth may be perceived as privation.

The shortfall between wanting and having creates a perception of scarcity. Thus, the subjective experience of scarcity occurs within a wide range of economic circumstances. At the extreme of poverty, among large families in regions where per capita income or access to land is insufficient to provide life's bare necessities, the sense of scarcity and the stark reality probably coincide. But in societies that would be considered affluent by most objective criteria, a ten-percent decline in income is also likely to be perceived as scarcity. When real wages decline to the point that current income does not cover accustomed expenditures, this creates effective scarcity, even at high levels of income.

The *subjectivity* of scarcity explains the relatively modest family size that we find across cultures and periods of history, because only rarely have very large families seemed affordable. Foreign aid, which so often appears as either a windfall or a rescue, made many people lose sight of essential scarcity. (See my 1993 book, *Population Politics*, reissued in 2000 with a new introduction.)

Continuing infusions of foreign aid combined with the heady experience of throwing off colonial governments (India, Pakistan, Indonesia, much of North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa), expropriating corporations (Saudi Arabia and other oil countries, South America), and populist revolutions (China, Bangladesh, Cuba) resulted in vast redistribution of, and increases in, wealth.

In the short term, aid provided for better health care, free and nearly universal education for children, more and better food crops, new and novel infrastructure (including electricity), and the promise of much more to come. Unfortunately, ordinary people began to believe that their future prosperity and well-being were assured.

In such optimistic climates, people marry young, want large families, and experience closely spaced births. The traditional, worldwide disciplines by which large family size has always been avoided—late marriage and long periods of sexual abstinence between births—were cast away.

At the same time, mortality rates, particularly for infants and children, declined dramatically after World War II because of improved health care. Theories drawn from (flawed) observation of the demographic transition in Western countries suggested that families would spontaneously reduce childbearing when they saw more of their children surviving.

In a succession of European countries, infant mortality declined *after* or, at best, simultaneously with a drop in the fertility rate. This means that the decline in infant mortality *could not have caused* the decline in fertility. Demographers were wrong in their optimistic assumptions about cause and effect. It should not have been such a shock to international planners when fertility shot up in most Asian, South American, and African countries even while more children survived, the standard of living improved, and expectations of rising opportunity took hold in the national consciousness.

The connection between *perceived* economic opportunity and fertility rates is not peculiar to the Third World: Motivations and hesitations around the issues of childbearing are wellnigh universal. In the United States, from the colonial era onward, periods of exuberance and economic optimism are marked by high and rising fertility rates. On the other hand, fertility is lower when the economy and the average person's expectations are depressed. Contrast the very *low* fertility during the Depression era with the Baby Boom during the 1947-1962 period of postwar prosperity.

The OPEC cartel and rising oil prices in 1973-74, probably related to the onset of inflation and stagnant real wages, caused the U.S. fertility rate to decline again. Today, one would expect that the strong economy would result in significantly higher fertility rates. Indeed, there has been recovery from the below-replacement rate levels of the 1970's.

What is interesting, however, is that the Hispanic fertility rate in the United States is significantly higher than the black rate, and fully one child per woman higher than the non-Hispanic white rate. Moreover, an analysis by economist Diane Macunovich suggests that native-born Americans as a group are having fewer babies because of immigration's depressing effect on wages and the conditions of work. Macunovich writes in the November 1999 issue of *Population and Environment* that approximately one American birth is foregone for each immigrant who comes to the United States.

Leaving Western examples, India is a country where perceived economic opportunity appears, repeatedly, to have changed population size and growth rates. India's population

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was nearly stable from 400 B.C. to about A.D. 1500, but population began growing, reaching a rate of 0.6 percent a year, with the end of the Mogul invasions, the restoration of peace, and the stimulus of new trade opportunities. Southern India enjoyed particular prosperity under the Vijayanagar kings. The strongest of these, Krishna Deva Raya (1509-1530), is described "as an early advocate of free trade." According to A. Spaeth writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, this king "imported velvets and damasks from Aden and China, horses from Arabia, elephants from Ceylon, gold, silver . . . and precious gems."

European trade offered India further opportunity by creating many jobs in new enterprises. Population growth accelerated after 1900, but the real takeoff came with independence in 1947, as it was perceived that wealth being taken out of the country by the British would now devolve upon the Indian people themselves. In the following decades, the rate of growth accelerated, ultimately reaching 2.3 percent annually.

Part of the growth was due to lower mortality rates, but a major portion was caused by higher fertility. Demographer Mahinder Chaudry writes in *Population and Environment* that births per woman rose from less than four in the 1930's to approximately six in the 1960's.

The failure of a six-year program explicitly designed to lower fertility by improving child survival and family health is also revealing. In the 1960's, British physicians John Wyon and J.E. Gordon provided a whole village with education, nutritional supplements, public health, direct medical care, and a family-planning program. Eventually, everyone knew about contraception, villagers had positive attitudes toward the health-care providers and family planning, and infant mortality had plummeted. But the fertility rate stayed high. Further research yielded one simple answer: Villagers were delighted that now, with lower infant mortality, they could have the six children that seemed to them the ideal family size.

The fertility rate in most Third World countries has begun to decline, and developments concurrent with this decline are revealing. International aid progressively diminished after 1980, more countries were cast on their own resources, other sources of foreign exchange (such as revenue from exports) collapsed, and the size of family farms diminished. People struggled to afford benefits that had formerly been free and which they had come to value. Kenyans, for example, had learned to value education when it was a free good; by the 1990's, families struggled to afford school fees and saw this expense as a reason to limit family size.

The Kenyan example suggests that foreign aid has had a perverse effect in two ways. Initially, it encouraged a sense of expanding opportunity that stimulated childbearing. But having raised expectations and aspirations, the withdrawal of aid has hastened the decline in fertility by heightening many people's sense of deprivation. Ironically, scarcity is measured by deprivation of a good that had not, formerly, been wanted or valued. If this means that foreign aid made the fertility rate decline after all, one can only say that the mechanism is not what the optimists had predicted!

In Egypt, euphoria took hold in the late 1970's due to a liberalized economy, cheap electricity from the High Aswân Dam, control over the Suez Canal, and annual U.S. payments pursuant to the Camp David accords. These developments were accompanied by a rising fertility rate. But by the late 1980's, optimism had given way to harsher realities. Government revenues had stagnated, Egypt was importing an increasing proportion of food, Cairo schools were so crowded that several three-hour shifts had to be crowded into a day, and underemployment was rife. College professors drove taxis, and teachers (who taught only one shift due to job sharing) eked out a living as waiters. With a renewed sense of scarcity, Egyptians hastily began to reduce their fertility rate.

Many African countries that achieved historically high fertility rates in the 1960's and 70's have seen declines. From the time of independence in 1957, the Moroccan economy thrived and fertility rates rose; fertility remained high so long as the price of phosphates was high and the government could subsidize many of the costs of child rearing, including education, health care, food, and housing. When phosphate prices collapsed in 1974-75, the economy reversed, and so did fertility rates.

Similarly, the Nigerian economy boomed through the middle 1980's as oil revenues and international loans poured in; fertility rates reached historic highs. Ten years later, international lending agencies had retrenched, jobs were hard to find, more education was required to get a job, parents perceived that it was harder to keep children alive, and—no surprise—the fertility rate began to fall. About two thirds of Nigerians questioned in one study spontaneously volunteered the information that life had got harder, and this was their reason for delaying marriage and childbearing.

The message is *not* that industrialized countries should induce hardship in countries struggling to develop. The meaning of my research, rather, is that aid should not be the means of making a bad situation worse. One should avoid creating expectations that prevent the decline in fertility rates that naturally occurs when a future-oriented sense of caution impels people to delay marriage and to increase spacing between children.

Unrealistically high expectations for the future—fueled in part by foreign aid—were a stimulus to rising fertility rates for several decades after World War II. Government-sponsored aid, concessionary loan rates, and loan forgiveness distort perceptions about international wealth and the wealth that can reasonably be transferred (that is, given away) from richer to poorer nations.

Few countries have the resources to provide out of the public purse for large numbers of children. Foreign aid, except in short-term crises, encourages Third World governments to relieve families of many of the everyday costs of life. It subsidizes large families. Subsidies distort perceptions, leading to overconsumption of goods (in this case, children) and creating a continuing state of poverty from which few can hope to escape.

Childbearing imposes costs, as humans have understood for eons. Nothing should be allowed to impair the natural parental predisposition to weigh the value of having a child—and giving this child the best possible start in life—against other desirable or necessary uses for resources.

Discontinuation of most foreign aid would allow the return of the usual human condition—perceived scarcity—and would encourage evaluation of alternatives, including childbearing, in terms of their true cost. The goal, worldwide, should be an unsubsidized environment in which each family weighs the desire for children against other wants and needs. Such reality-testing will lead eventually to stability, or even reduction, in population size, so that the number of people remains comfortably within the carrying capacity of the environment.

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Games Elites Play

Russia and the IMF

by Sergey Berdyaev

Darren Gygi

"Lord knows where that went," Boris Yeltsin croaked to one of his Kremlin aides sometime last September. Yeltsin, according to Kremlin sources, was replying to a query from the International Monetary Fund on the expenditure of nearly two billion dollars worth of an IMF "tranche" targeted to stave off impending Russian financial disaster in the summer of 1998. The taxpayers of the Western states who back the IMF ponied up this money (and maybe more) to aid Russian "restructuring" and promote "market reforms" and "democracy." And what did they get for it? The ruble crashed, Russia defaulted on debts to the West, the government was thrown out, IMF money went unaccounted for, and the West did nothing. At least not then.

Cut to New York, February 2000. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the joint investigation by the Federal Reserve and the New York State Banking Department into alleged money laundering by the venerable Bank of New York (BNY) has uncovered not a trace of Russian mafia involvement in questionable transactions involving billions of dollars, some of them possibly diverted IMF funds, which were funneled through the BNY and offshore affiliates. The Russian media, controlled by the "oligarchs" (the shady businessmen-*cum*-godfathers who have run Russia since the beginning of the Yeltsin era), crowed about the reports, claiming that the whole thing had been nothing more than another example of Russophobia. At worst, according to the oligarchs' mouthpieces, the money was transferred offshore by legitimate businessmen wishing to circumvent Russia's very greedy tax man. Nothing more.

But just as the *Journal* and its Russian counterparts were smugly huffing about anti-capitalist and anti-Russian propaganda, a couple of Russian-born stool pigeons turned up singing in a federal court in New York. Lucy Edwards, a BNY vice president working at the bank's London branch, and her husband, Peter Berlin (reportedly still a Russian citizen), admitted that they had been involved in money laundering after all. As reported in the *Washington Post*, the pair had been working for a group of Moscow banks for four years, setting up front companies and conducting more than 160,000 transactions worth more than seven billion dollars while funneling the money out of Russia and into BNY and other offshore accounts. Merely tax avoidance? Maybe not. Edwards, who with her spouse made nearly two million dollars worth of "commissions" on the transactions, told federal prosecutors that some of her Russian counterparts at Moscow's DKB bank were afraid of their customers, since the "businessmen" were often accompanied by young lads toting "machine guns." Federal investigators want to determine how much of the money came from organized crime. (The machine guns must have tipped them off; the *New York Times* reported that Edwards and Berlin had been involved in laundering a $300,000 ransom payment for a kidnapped Moscow businessman.)

The *Times* article mentioned an especially interesting point: Sobinbank, one of the Russian banks that was serviced by Edwards and Berlin, is partly owned by oligarch Aleksandr Smolensky, boss of SBS-Agro, a bankrupt Russian megabank which, in turn, is allegedly partly owned by "oligarch number one," Boris Berezovsky, and his protégé, Roman Abramovich. Abramovich is known in Russia as the "family's cashier," the "family" being the group of Kremlin courtiers and Yeltsin relatives who flooded the Kremlin (and robbed the Russian treasury) under "Czar Boris."

What the American newspaper accounts did not mention was the suspicion that IMF funds, too, had been funneled through front companies set up by Edwards and Berlin. This suspicion was voiced by some investigators (and a few U.S. con-

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Sergey Berdyaev is a journalist who covers the former Soviet Union.

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gressmen) last fall when the banking scandal story broke. House Banking Committee Chairman Jim Leach (R-IA) held a series of hearings last spring on the scandal, citing claims in Russian and European media that $200 million worth of IMF funds had wound up in the BNY. The hearings were inconclusive, as the IMF pilfering charge was drowned out by a fit of apologetics by IMF and Clinton administration officials.

The scandal itself was very difficult to follow; American media reports (deliberately?) skated over some very curious facts that turned up in Italian and some Russian accounts. First, the numbers of BNY transactions involving Russian accounts sharply increased around the time of the August 1998 Russian financial meltdown, as did the amounts of money involved. Boris Berezovsky reportedly owned a stake in a BNY affiliate in Switzerland. He, Smolensky, and Abramovich would have been well placed to help the Russian Central Bank divert IMF funds offshore during the August 1998 crisis. For his part, Smolensky has been pleading poverty with his creditors since the August debacle and stood to gain by spiriting SBS-Agro funds abroad. The Russian government has been fretting about the fate of SBS-Agro, which ARKO, the Russian agency in charge of bank "restructuring," has deemed too big to write off completely. (The World Bank, among other semi-official institutions, has been helping Russia bear the costs of "restructuring" a slew of bankrupt and inefficient Russian enterprises. Russian financial institutions, we are told, are practically broke, and the Russian government is doing all it can.) Meanwhile, Abramovich and Berezovsky, both of whom were crying poverty, have recently bought 70 percent of Russia's aluminum production capacity. Nobody knows where they got the money.

Second, Russian sources within the state auditing apparatus maintain that nearly two billion dollars of IMF and World Bank funds, some of which were designated as part of an emergency IMF "stabilization credit" to Russia at the time of the crisis, were diverted to offshore banks set up by the Russian Central Bank. (Remember the IMF's demand following the crisis that the Russian Central Bank sell off its offshore affiliates?) This money, which allegedly never made it into Central Bank accounts, could have wound up in the BNY or its web of affiliates. Moreover, the Central Bank had been illegally speculating on GKO's—the short-term, high-return securities that formed the "GKO Pyramid" that financed the Russian budget—with its own currency reserves and Russian budget funds, a definite no-no in the eyes of the IMF. After all, the IMF billions were supposed to bolster the Central Bank's currency reserves, not its stake for the GKO crapshoot. Sergei Dubinin, Russian Central Bank chief at the time, sharply denied that any IMF funds had been diverted—and he was replaced thereafter by Viktor Gerashenko, a banker who was widely respected in the West and trusted by the IMF. Gerashenko also founded FIMACO, the notorious offshore Central Bank affiliate that was conceived as a means of spiriting Communist Party gold out of a collapsing Soviet Union and later was likely a transit point for some diverted Western loans.

Third, the IMF knew all about the chicanery, but kept its collective mouth shut, as did numerous American and European bureaucrats and politicians. Nikolai Gonchar, at the time a Russian Duma deputy and member of the Duma Budget Committee, told *La Stampa* last fall that the IMF "knew everything" about the diverted funds. According to Gonchar, the IMF was presented with an audit of the Central Bank in 1995 that showed that the bank was diverting foreign loans abroad to Gerashenko's FIMACO. *Moskovsky Komsomolets*' Leonid Krutakov, writing in August 1999, claimed that he knew the reason for the IMF's silence: Western speculators were playing the GKO game as well. They—like the oligarchs, the Russian government, Western politicos, and the IMF—foresaw the coming collapse and convinced the IMF to cough up a "stabilization loan" as a means of temporarily bolstering the weakening ruble so that they could withdraw their investments from Russia without incurring heavy losses. The only problem was that the Central Bankers—and oligarchs—were not born yesterday. They did not even bother depositing the IMF cash in Central Bank accounts before sending it out of the country. The money went immediately to offshore accounts.

Krutakov's explanation makes perfect sense, but it does not explain everything. Why does the IMF continue to stonewall about the machinations of the Russian Central Bank and the oligarchs, claiming to this day that no IMF funds were diverted? (It is impossible to believe that such a corrupt group of opportunists as the Russian bureaucracy and the oligarchs would have passed up this golden opportunity.) And why did the Clinton administration—and its nominal opposition in Congress—drop the whole thing at the end of last year? Why has nobody brought up the question of embezzlement of IMF funds? *Chronicles* readers are already familiar with the theory that the entire BNY/IMF scandal was orchestrated by American elites as part of pre-election maneuvering. (See "Banking on Boris" in the December 1999 and January 2000 *Chronicles*.)

The pre-election theory is supported by the fact that Russia held its special presidential election on March 26 and that the interests of both Washington and Moscow elites appear to be served by a temporary revival of the BNY scandal (without any mention of the IMF if possible; no member of the global elite wants to discredit such an important organ of the nascent world government). The flagship weekly of Russia's nationalist movement, *Zavtra*, carried a report in its "*Tablo*" section in early February, before the revival of the BNY scandal in the American press, on Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's recent meeting with Vladimir Putin, Yeltsin's designated heir. According to *Zavtra*'s informers, Albright outlined a possible "secret agreement" between the Kremlin and the White House concerning "mutual cooperation in the period of the election cycle." Albright allegedly secured a promise from Putin that the Duma would approve the START II treaty in return for a merely feigned anti-Russian campaign in the United States, the aim of which is to help Al Gore's presidential campaign. Presumably, the American side would also ease up on the Chechnya issue. (Clinton's criticisms have been much less strident than the Europeans'.) According to the *Zavtra* sources, the recent seizure of a Russian tanker by American warships in the Persian Gulf was part of the "secret agreement." More interesting, though, is *Zavtra*'s contention that the Americans would revive, for a time, their "struggle" with Russia's "financial mafia." The paper claimed that Putin might use the opportunity to sacrifice a disposable member of the Russian oligarchy to burnish his anti-corruption credentials both at home and abroad. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* articles were published the following week. But the bottom line (for American taxpayers especially) is that the Great Elite IMF Crapshoot will continue and that the questions raised by the renewed BNY scandal will likely go unanswered.

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"All the News Unfit to Print"

Signs of the Times

Vol. 2 No. 6 June 2000

A decade after the ostensible end of the Cold War, we are witnessing the emergence of anti-Americanism in places where it had never existed before—notably, among the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Bill Clinton's misnamed "national security team" have succeeded where Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev failed.

"If we have to use force, it is because we are America," says Mrs. Albright. "We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see farther into the future." "Now I count myself an American patriot," Pat Buchanan responds, "but if this Beltway braggadocio has begun to grate on me, how must it grate upon the Europeans, Russians, and peoples subject to our sanctions?"

The answer is that it is beginning to grate even on America's usually obedient clients, and the immediate cause is the proposed National Missile Defense system. Vladimir Yakovlev, commander of Russia's strategic missile forces, says the U.S. plan would trigger a new Cold War arms race. Sha Zukang, director of arms control for China's Foreign Ministry, warns that rewriting the ABM Treaty "will tip the global balance, trigger a new arms race and jeopardize world and regional stability." America's European partners are equally unhappy with the project: the French defense minister and the British foreign secretary have both warned Washington against such a unilateral move. Now even Canada is proving reluctant to join. Writing in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, Rick Salutin suggested that, far from providing protection against "rogue nations," America is the ultimate "rogue" (April 7):

> The NMD itself is a kind of rogue action since, as even the United States admits, recent disarmament treaties will have to be suspended or canceled if it goes ahead.

Not only does the U.S. government act like a rogue state, says the Canadian commentator, it has adopted that mindset:

> It's touching to see Canadians [argue] against joining the NMD with sober reasons about undermining treaties or the futile science of anti-missile umbrellas or how the real danger lies in toting a nuclear bomb into the United States in a knapsack. It's as if you have a psycho in your neighbourhood who bullies everybody because he's paranoid and grandiose, then he starts placing cannons around his house and you earnestly argue about whether to help him or try to dissuade him, when all along you're simply terrified of the guy. What we have here is a world in denial.

Only three days later, the *Globe and Mail* published an editorial sharply critical of NMD. It concluded on a note of exasperation:

> Canada has a dilemma: It can deny support to a major ally, or embrace a project that will weaken or destroy the ABM Treaty and outrage the other nuclear powers while doing little if anything to counter a rogue threat. If pushed into a corner, Ottawa should deny support.

The reaction from Washington was just what one might expect. Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre has accused Canada of "a time-frozen perspective that goes back 15 years" (because it resists reopening the ABM Treaty) and hinted that the United States and Canada were "at an important pivot point" in their relationship, revolving "around the issue of national missile defense." NMD is evidently not meant to be an offer America's friends have the option to refuse.

ABM is not the only treaty that has been violated by the Clinton administration. In May 1996, the United States began a search for alternatives to antipersonnel land mines so that the U.S. military could completely eliminate their use, thus permitting America to join the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty (Ottawa Convention). Washington loudly demanded a total ban on land mines. But according to Human Rights Watch, a founder of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, the "new" mine about to be added to the American arsenal is no better than the old (www.hrw.org/press/2000/04/alternatives.htm):

> The prototype replacement system for "dumb" (non-self-destructing) mines has a feature that allows the weapon to be victim-activated. The American soldier would no longer select the target or control the weapon; instead the weapon would detonate itself. This feature, called the battlefield-override-system, turns the weapon into precisely the type of weapon the U.S. has said for years must be banned worldwide.

There is nothing wrong with America deciding to build anti-missile defenses and to maintain mines in its arsenal—if doing so is in the interest of its security and if the decision is the result of a comprehensive debate, not of arms manufacturers' lobbying. But we shouldn't sign treaties promising that we are not going to do it, and then do it anyway. Such an attitude is not only immoral, it is dangerous: It undermines this country's national security by promoting international lawlessness. It reflects the general erosion of the rule of law under the Clinton presidency.

The illegality and immorality of the war in Kosovo was a theme elaborated by numerous foreign editorialists as the anniversary of the war approached, including Michael Gove of the London *Times* (March 14):

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> NATO has never been weaker than in the aftermath of Kosovo. The alliance's main strategic function has been the maintenance of a community of interest between Europe and America. But the Kosovo campaign has done more damage to that than it ever did to the Serb Army. . . . The KLA presides over a drug-smuggling operation responsible for 40 per cent of the heroin sold in Europe and the US.

The only surprising part is that it's *only* 40 percent. But perhaps the KLA—recently converted into the U.N.-controlled "Kosovo Protection Corps"—is neglecting the business side of its operations because it is too busy "instituting the reign of terror," as reported in the *Observer* (London) on March 12:

> Murder, torture and extortion: these are the extraordinary charges made against the UN's own Kosovo Protection Corps in a confidential United Nations report written for Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The KPC stands accused in the document, drawn up on 29 February, of "criminal activities—killings, ill-treatment/torture, illegal policing, abuse of authority, intimidation, breaches of political neutrality and hate-speech." The UN's own damning verdict on its newly created civil defence force is fresh evidence of the failure of Special Representative Bernard Kouchner to establish the rule of law in Kosovo. The KPC is led by Croatian Army General Agim Ceku, the veteran ethnic cleanser of the Krajina, who comes in for fierce criticism from the report.

Perhaps the United Nations protests too much. In view of his previous record, entrusting the KPC to Ceku was tantamount to making Bill Clinton the principal of a girl's school.

Not to be outdone, the *Observer*'s main rival, the *Sunday Times* of London, published a Kosovo scoop of it own on the same day. This article confirms that being paranoid about U.S. intentions in the Balkans doesn't mean Albright is *not* out to get you. The British weekly now reveals that the OSCE Verification Mission in Kosovo was, from the outset, a covert operation unit that functioned as a liaison between Western (primarily American) agencies and the KLA, and that American intelligence agents had trained the KLA long before NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia:

> Central Intelligence Agency officers were cease-fire monitors in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999, developing ties with the KLA and giving American military training manuals and field advice on fighting the Yugoslav army and Serbian police. When the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which co-ordinated the monitoring, left Kosovo a week before airstrikes began a year ago, many of its satellite telephones and global positioning systems were secretly handed to the KLA, ensuring that guerrilla commanders could stay in touch with NATO and Washington. Several KLA leaders had the mobile phone number of General Wesley Clark, the NATO commander.

On March 21, the eminent German daily *Frankfurter Rundshau* revealed that Bulgarian and German secret services had forged a "secret Serb plan" that was used as justification for NATO airstrikes. The plan, code-named "Horseshoe," purported to prove that the Serbs had planned ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Albanians well before the NATO bombing campaign. The German paper quoted Heinz Loquai, a retired Bundeswehr brigadier general, who says that the "plan" was no more than an intelligence assessment written in Sofia and embellished in Bonn:

> But during the NATO war "Horseshoe" was given top billing. It was first revealed by Joschka Fischer, the German foreign minister, on April 6 last year . . . it was mentioned again at a press conference by the Bundeswehr Inspector-General Hans-Peter von Kierbach. The general claimed that this document provided evidence that Belgrade wanted to liquidate the KLA "even if that would mean extermination of the Albanians in Kosovo."

"Operation Horseshoe" provided ammunition to the interventionist chorus in the U.S. media. On April 15 of last year, it was invoked by William Pfaff in the *International Herald Tribune* in support of his claim that it would be "immoral" to stop the bombing:

> Mr. Milosevic and his government are attempting to solve their Kosovo problem by producing a basic demographic change in the province through deporting its Albanian population . . . Horseshoe was designed to produce a permanent solution, and was launched even before the Rambouillet discussions in February, which the Serbian leadership did not take seriously.

On April 24, 1999, Bulgarian Prime Minister Kostov quoted "Horseshoe" to justify the pending Bulgarian collaboration with NATO. It was used most recently by the State Department's James Rubin at the end of February.

The truth about "Horseshoe" remains unfit to print in America; but in Europe, it is now common knowledge that this was yet another Kosovo lie. On April 2, the *Sunday Times* of London printed a story of its own about General Loquai's findings:

> Loquai has accused Rudolf Scharping, the German defence minister, of obscuring the origins of Operation Horseshoe . . . "No such operation ever existed. The criticism of the war, which had grown into a fire that was almost out of control, was completely extinguished by Operation Horseshoe."

Loquai says that the German defense ministry even coined the name "Horseshoe." But this eagerness to embellish the forgery gave the game away: The Germans named the bogus operation "*Potkova*," which is the *Croatian* word for horseshoe. The Serbian word for horseshoe is "*Potkovica*." It is a bit like claiming that a secret IRA document was called "Operation Londonderry."

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Hell Man

by J.O. Tate

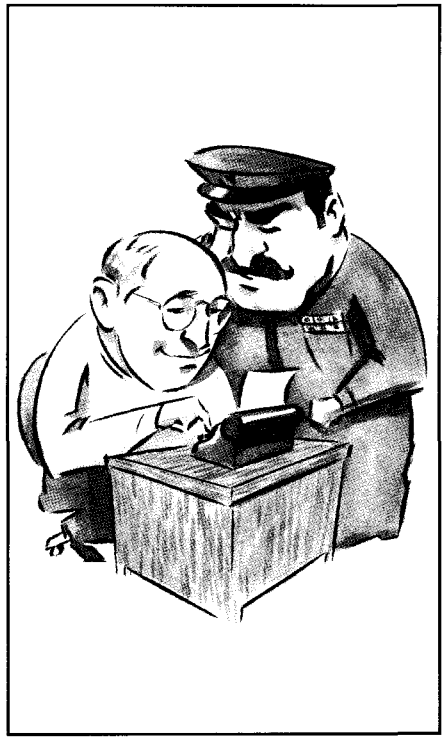
"My views on Hammett expressed [above]. He was tops. Often wonder why he quit writing after The Thin Man. *Met him only once, very nice looking tall quiet gray-haired fearful capacity for Scotch, seemed quite unspoiled to me. (Time out for ribbon adjustment.)"*

—Raymond Chandler,
Letter to Alex Barris

Dashiell Hammett: Complete Novels
Edited by Steven Marcus
New York: The Library of America;
975 pp., $35.00

◆

Why should we be surprised to see the Continental Op, that chunky and deglamorized veteran of the pulp pages of *Black Mask* back in the 1920's (not to mention Sam Spade, Ned Beaumont, and Nick Charles), published upscale like this 70 years later, with everything arranged so nicely on acid-free paper, and with a ribbon to mark our place as though this volume were the Bible or poetry or something? But that's just the point. This book is a bible of an inverted kind, and poetry too—also inverted. But we shouldn't be that surprised, because this same volume (these five novels) was in effect published by Knopf, though not so nicely or so scrupulously edited, as *The Complete Dashiell Hammett* in 1942. This stuff has been retreaded so many times—and in so many languages—that it is hard to keep score. That's why it is classic, get it? Not because the schoolmarm told you so, but because you bought it cheap when you wanted to, off the rack down at the drug store, in 40's and early 50's paperbacks for 25 cents. Dashiell Hammett was the straight goods with bad girls and booze and guns and everything, and now the schoolmarms are telling you that it is literature when they used to be the ones



Darren Gygi

who liked *Silas Marner* when you liked *Red Harvest* a lot better than that, but life is not fair and you had to write your book report on *Silas Marner* or else stay after school and wash the blackboard and clean the erasers by clapping them, but you spent your own money on Dashiell Hammett when the schoolmarm wasn't trying to bore you to death, because one day you were going to have your own gun and your own booze and your own broad to go with them, and if she crossed you, then you were going to send that broad over like Sam Spade did Brigid, whose name rhymed with "frigid" but everybody knew she wasn't, which was why you were reading it in the first place, so when the schoolmarm started in again on little Eppie and Silas Marner, you knew deep down exactly why they didn't let you have a gun yet either.

So the emotionally laden status of this material must be conceded. And the waves of memory and confusion and nostalgia—yes, and anger and pity as well; I'll get to that in a minute—wash over us in an ineffable and inexorable sequence of splashes (mood music here) compounded of tears, sweat, and Johnny Walker Red Label, one of Dash's favorites. I hasten to admit that I was not one of Dash's intimates, but I always think of him as "Dash" because of that dreadful movie, *Julia* (1977), with Jane Fonda as Lillian Hellman, and Vanessa Redgrave cast way against type as a communist whatever (Academy Award), and Jason Robards as "Dash," whom he vaguely resembled, or whom in other words he did not look much like (also Academy Award). I find it hard to get the contamination of that movie out of my mind, which is precisely why it was made and why Hollywood loved it. And that level of confusion is only one of those compounded by other books—bring out the Hellmans and bring out the best. How mandatory it was to establish a connection—a laying on of hands, a communion of the devils—between the Old Left and the New, from Lillian Hellman to Jane Fonda as from John Reed to Warren Beatty, and you get the idea. Wim Wenders' *Hammett* (1982) was so much better, and who ever heard of an *Irving* or a *James*, though there have been movies about Poe and Twain, of course, and one named *Chandler* as well.

And of course there was Howard Duff on the radio as Sam Spade 50 years ago,

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

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and earlier there was Bogart as Sam Spade with Peter Lorre and Sidney Greenstreet and Mary Astor and Elisha Cook, Jr., in the third filmed version of *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), not to mention Brian Donlevy and Veronica Lake and Alan Ladd getting the bejesus knocked out of him by William Bendix in the second version of *The Glass Key* (1942), not additionally to mention all those *Thin Man* movies with William Powell and Myrna Loy and Asta and the martinis. But to be a bit less nostalgic, there are all the oblique transmogrifications of *Red Harvest*, like Akira Kurosawa's samurai movie *Yojimbo* (1961) with Toshiro Mifune, and then Sergio Leone's spaghetti western *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) with Clint Eastwood, and *Last Man Standing*, just a couple of years ago, with Bruce Willis. The Coen brothers' *Blood Simple* took its title from a phrase from *Red Harvest*, and their *Miller's Crossing* is derived largely from *The Glass Key*, so I guess the point is made.

So yes, this writer did make art as well as money out of entertainment, and he has been rightly called by George Grella the most important American detective story writer since Edgar Allan Poe. That's essentially why we see him in *The Library of America* alongside Henry James and all the rest of them, but what I want to know is where were all the rest of them when Samuel Dashiell Hammett was being grilled by Senator McCarthy and Roy Cohn and Senator McClellan. I mean, try to imagine Benjamin Franklin or Mark Twain or Eudora Welty in the scenario whereby Hammett was called before the Permanent Subcommittee Investigation of the Senate Committee on Government Operations on March 26, 1953, during an investigation of the purchase of books written by communists for the State Department libraries overseas. In sum, the idea was that it was subversive for this country to display the same books that were loved by many Americans and which are now recognized as part of the nation's literary heritage.

> Mr. Hammett: The first book was *Red Harvest*. It was published in 1929. I think I wrote it in 1927, either in 1927 or 1928.
>
> Mr. Cohn: At the time you wrote that book, were you a member of the Communist Party?
>
> Mr. Hammett: I decline to answer, on the grounds that an answer might tend to incriminate me. . . .
>
> The Chairman [Senator McCarthy]: Mr. Hammett, let me ask you this. Forgetting about yourself for the time being, is it a safe assumption that any member of the Communist Party, under Communist discipline, would propagandize the Communist cause, normally, regardless of whether he was writing fiction books or books on politics?
>
> Mr. Hammett: I can't answer that, because I honestly don't know.

I wasn't there taking notes in 1953, so I got this dialogue out of Richard Layman's *Shadow Man: The Life of Dashiell Hammett* (1981). Hammett seems to have answered honestly to Senator McCarthy on the point quoted, but it is less likely today to be conceded that Senator McCarthy asked a pertinent question. Even so, the committee was off base about books. Providing books doesn't mean endorsing them, otherwise libraries would be nearly empty. President Eisenhower himself commented on the propriety of putting Hammett's books in overseas libraries: He thought it was okay. Yes, political supervision of literature can be funny in more ways than one:

> The Chairman: Mr. Hammett, if you were spending, as we are, over a hundred million dollars a year on an information program allegedly for the purpose of fighting communism, and if you were in charge of that program to fight communism, would you purchase the works of some 75 Communist authors and distribute their works throughout the world, placing our official stamp of approval upon these works?
>
> Or would you rather not answer that question?
>
> Mr. Hammett: Well, I think—of course, I don't know—if I were fighting communism, I don't think I would do it by giving people any books at all.
>
> The Chairman: From an author, that sounds unusual.

Hammett had already been sentenced to jail for contempt of court in 1951 in a case involving the bail fund of the Civil Rights Congress, of which he was a trustee. In that case, Hammett was questioned by District Attorney Irving Saypol, who had directed the prosecution of the Rosenbergs. After Hammett got out of jail, his health was broken, his money was gone, and he never wrote again. Indeed, he had not written fiction for publication since 1934. He spent the later 30's and the later 40's pushing left-wing politics. There seems to be at least the suggestion that communism had something to do with the failure of Hammett's imagination, which was the imposing question put to him by Joe McCarthy, of all people.

There was some kind of self-destruction. Alcohol is one kind. Waste is another—Hammett threw away many thousands of dollars and who knows how much talent. Hammett's jail term was not merely a case of victimization—Hammett somehow wanted to go to jail, and said being there was like going home. Hammett's communism has to be seen as another kind of waste, like the fumes of alcohol and satanic smoke that his image exudes. There's something surreal about Hammett's communism—it just doesn't compute. This man who dropped out of school at 13 was always a reader and an autodidact, a man who with reason prided himself on his intelligence and insight. But in March 1945, he was reading—alongside volumes of Wallace Stegner, Georges Simenon, and Heinrich Heine—the incongruous, boring, and grossly distorting volume II of the Selected Works of Lenin, *Theoretical Principles of Marxism*. This man who prided himself on seeing through the surfaces of things, who portrayed the implications of gangsterism and politics brilliantly in *Red Harvest* and *The Glass Key*, goofily but not unknowingly promoted whatever Stalin wanted. On April 8, 1938, he joined Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Lillian Hellman, Malcolm Cowley, and many others in supporting the purges in Moscow. Not long after, in 1941, Hammett joined with other communists, fellow travelers, and Popular Frontniks in opposing both the Lend-Lease policy of aid to Britain and American entry into the war because of the Nazi-Soviet pact—then flipped with Stalin, supporting the war effort after the

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Nazi attack on Soviet Russia. In other words, Hammett, who gave us the Sam Spade who wouldn't "play the sap" for Brigid O'Shaugnessy, himself played the sap for Comrade Stalin and even, for a time, for Herr Hitler, best-selling author of *Mein Kampf*. Perhaps Hammett's service in his late 40's during World War II was, deep down, both an admission of guilt and a gesture of solidarity with the country that he had betrayed. But itself in bed with the Soviet Union, that country wasn't picky about details until later, and again Hammett paid the price without complaint. Hammett is not the only communist who is enshrined in the Library of America—W.E.B. Du Bois and Richard Wright are two others. The whole subject of political radicalism is difficult and requires a balanced view, whatever that is. One thing we have to remember is that it was their experience in this country, not ideology alone, that made Hammett, Wright, and Du Bois go down some strange paths. In the meanwhile, we may reflect that "subversion" is an aspect of literary distinction in Poe, Melville, and Hawthorne, not just the lockstep left. That's the library of America. As for politics, there is a particular sentence of Layman's that is rather devastating in its ambiguity: "Many of the views Hammett held on domestic issues would seem middle-of-the-road today." Did Layman actually mean to imply (or admit, as it strikes this layman) that the communist agenda has been accomplished? Oops—another cat out of the bag, but never mind.

So we can go around and around about politics, and we come out by the same swinging doors through which we entered. And we can also look at a life and try to judge it: an action which is not only problematical but leads to judging books by the life of their author, a mug's game. And so we come back to the books after all, and we can see why they have survived their time and context for three generations. The most explicitly political, *Red Harvest*, is a vision of "Poisonville," a corrupt Western mining town based on Butte and Anaconda. The political bosses are indistinguishable from the gangsters they fight, and the operative from the Continental detective agency, based on Hammett's own days with the Pinkertons, makes sure that the gangs slaughter each other. The novel's Marxist angle is that no authority is legitimate and all property is theft, but the feel of the book is related less to ideology than to the hard-bitten tone of modernism, and to a surreal black humor as well. Hammett's sensibility in *Red Harvest* is aligned to that of Hemingway, of the Faulkner of *Sanctuary*, and of Nathanael West. He was indebted to none of them, though he knew all three. The knowledge of crime and of violence that Hammett had come by through grim experience, and the bitterness he felt as a result of strikebreaking by the Pinkertons, came together in this vision, the exaggeration of which only masks the uncomfortable truths that the country has swept under the rug.

A lesser work, *The Dain Curse* is a mess, but an interesting one. Its Gothic elements seem retrograde until we realize that Hammett is going after "the opium of the people" in the form of a phony religious cult. But having written two novels narrated by the Continental Op, Hammett never did so again, turning to a severely limited third person and three new protagonists.

Though famous as a melodrama, *The Maltese Falcon* has not yet completely received its due as a composition, as a poem made out of words. Sam Spade calls the falcon a "dingus," and in a famous example of misdirection, he calls the punk, Wilmer, a "gunsel." In both cases, he was more right than his readers knew. Such cunning wordplay may suggest that there is more to be found in that remarkable novel, the greatest single example of its kind. The clash of dictions, as between Gutman and Spade, generates a Shakespearean tension and even eloquence, which is then exploded by Spade's nihilism and laid-back violence. Hammett told James Thurber that the book was pure Henry James, with names from *The Turn of the Screw* and *The Portrait of a Lady* and some plot from *The Wings of the Dove*. George Grella has analyzed that proposition, which is another reason why Hammett should be classified with James, as, in this publication, he is. A complete analysis of the language of that novel, and of the uncanny ambiguity about the dismissal of the Crusaders in the context of Spade's satanism, has yet to be seen. In a story that cites the Hospitallers and the Templars, "San Francisco" nominates a saint as well as a setting, and "Saint Louis" may have as much to do with Joinville as it does with the Mississippi.

Hammett said that *The Glass Key* was his favorite of his own books, but there is a serious problem with it. Hammett pushed the limited third person so hard in that novel that he wound up constructing a bafflement, whereby we never know about Ned Beaumont's motives, even though his unstated code seems to be the burden of the book. Disregarding the urban violence and political corruption (this time set in the East, probably Baltimore), we can see here that Hammett was beginning to run up against insoluble (if self-defined) difficulties. The stylized descriptions of clenched teeth and hard eyes and other such melodramatic gestures do not wear well. But the picture of a corrupt and treacherous world which must be seen through for what it is remains one of the most striking representations of urban America ever drawn. If it is "melodramatic" or "exaggerated," then a cross-check with the daily newspaper may be in order.

Ned Beaumont was in part a self-portrait of Hammett himself. Nick Charles of *The Thin Man* was based on Hammett as well, but by now the mode had shifted toward the comic, and Hollywood had no trouble in exploiting that. So Hammett's last work has always seemed to be a letdown, but it is not without its serious side. We think we "know" it, remembering all those late shows, but many do not remember who "the thin man" actually was. And only those with a clear picture of the text in mind can recall a remarkable digression about cannibalism. That set piece concerning a taboo may suggest something about the viciousness of human nature as we have known it in Hammett's world, and therefore a reason why Hammett's Marxism and not his fiction became his commitment. Books could not redeem humanity—only Uncle Joe Stalin could do that.

Today, we have to look at the volume that wraps these five novels with an acknowledgment that Hammett deserves his place in the national pantheon, but beyond the words on the page lie memories as troubled as his vision of America. Mouldering in his grave at Arlington (where he was buried at his own request), Dashiell Hammett is still a discomfiting presence—a self-destructive personality whose life is painful to consider, a reproachful ghost at the capitalist/consumerist feast who reminds us of what is so convenient to forget, and a troubling example as well of the ambiguity of politics, the whirligig of wisdom and folly.

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A Race Apart

by Paul Gottfried

"A people still, whose common ties are gone;
Who, mixed with every race, are lost in none."

—George Crabbe

Darren Gygi

The Culture of Critique
by Kevin MacDonald
Westport, CT: Praeger;
379 pp., $65.00

◆

Kevin MacDonald's study of the Jewish people in sociobiological perspective will not likely help his career, for reasons having nothing to do with the author's scholarship or his accumulation of pertinent evidence. While treating his subjects respectfully, attributing to Ashkenazic Jews a mean I.Q. one standard deviation higher than that of white gentiles, he commits the indiscretion of describing Jewish behavioral characteristics noted as well by antisemites: for example, an aggressive demeanor toward the core cultures of host peoples in combination with the practice of ritually and socially prescribed separation from gentiles, which he ascribes to a form of collective consciousness that may be inborn as well as culturally acquired. MacDonald presents this consciousness as endemic to a group that has worked strenuously to preserve its genotypal identity.

MacDonald's argument is based on two presuppositions. One, MacDonald regards the Jews not as a succession of self-identified peoples revealing genetic and cultural overlap, but as a single nation existing from antiquity to the present. Since Jews view themselves in this fashion and because they have been at pains, until recently, to refrain from intermarriage, his assumption may be defensible. Two, MacDonald maintains that contemporary Jews, particularly in the United States, oppose and protest even the remnants of the Christian host culture not because of any threat they face but simply in order to displace what they view as alien. Their distinctive culture, group dynamics, and jealously guarded genetic inheritance explain why organized Jewry resists any public manifestation of a non-Jewish American identity. Related to this stance of relentless opposition, which finds academic expression in the "culture of critique," is a Jewish characteristic that MacDonald views as invariably present: a drive to compete for social and material resources with those perceived as outsiders.

Since Jews supposedly have acquired a cognitive advantage over most other groups through careful eugenic practices, competition yields them remarkable success. In the past, their group performance was hindered by the host peoples' possession of a degree of ethnic consciousness comparable to their own. In these circumstances—medieval Europe, say, or 20th-century Russia—Jews have been limited in their collective and individual ambitions. As MacDonald explains in the second two volumes of his trilogy, such obstacles forced them to adopt daring strategies, most fatefully the embrace of revolutionary ideologies and programs. As an embattled out-group, Jews supported and led revolutionary movements in vast disproportion to their numbers. And while tensions have existed over the last 200 years between Rabbinic and revolutionary Jews, MacDonald is correct in suggesting that the conflict has not been as sharp as is commonly believed. Many observant Jews have been on the political left, and today Orthodox Jews feel no compunction about voting for left-liberal politicians such as Barbara Boxer and Charles Schumer. (The same observation would apply to Catholic minorities in England and Canada.)

Like most speculative studies, MacDonald's work is open to question. Its emphasis on the continuities between ancient and modern Jews assumes more sameness than may exist, while exaggerating the degree to which Jewish theism was an invention intended to intensify ethnic solidarity. A huge historiographic literature presents the opposite view: namely, that Jewish national consciousness began as a by-product of Jewish monotheism. And in pre-Rabbinic Judaism, intermarriage did occur frequently between Jewish and non-Jewish elites—Moses, Solomon, and the rulers of the two post-Solomonic Jewish king-

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Paul Gottfried, a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, is the author, most recently, of After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State *(Princeton).*

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doms and of the Hasmoneans at the end of the Second Commonwealth all were married to gentile wives.

Generalizations about prohibitions against intermarriage derived from the restrictions imposed on the Kohanim (the Jewish priestly class) can be dangerous. As explained in Leviticus and by the priestly historian Josephus, the priesthood represented a "pure race" by virtue of having kept itself from certain forms of intermarriage. Among the forbidden unions in question, however, were those between priests and widows or divorcees, while priestly families were expected (and continue to be expected, especially among Sephardim) to marry within their caste. Exogamy for nonpriestly Jews is an overstepping of social boundaries. Moreover, the most outspoken of the Jewish separatists at the time of Jesus were the Essenes. According to Josephus's *History of the Jews*, no other Jewish sect, including the eventually triumphant Pharisees, went so far to avoid contact with alien peoples. But Essenes were also self-isolated monks, whose members shunned contact with women as much as they did with gentiles.

MacDonald also infers too much from current Jewish social behavior. Granting that present-day Jews and Jewish organizations deny to host nations the ethnic solidarity they claim for themselves, what historical generalizations can be drawn from that fact? MacDonald leaves the impression that Jews in exile have always operated in this fashion, but the gaps in historical evidence are too large to justify the inference. As he himself acknowledges, Jews a thousand years ago viewed life among gentiles as a penalty for their sins, a penalty which they would continue to suffer until a national savior returned them to their ancestral land. Before the last two centuries, Jews were in no position to dispossess gentiles, but coexisted with them in a situation of disparity. Even had they wanted to take over a Christian society, such a goal would have seemed beyond reach. And given their exclusion from professional and many commercial activities, premodern Jews could not successfully compete for resources. But is the Jews' present attempt at reconstructing gentile societies a recurrent aspect of Jewish-gentile relations? Or is MacDonald dealing with a unique cultural context, in which Jews and gentiles play historically conditioned roles?

Over the last hundred years or so, Jews have moved out of a traditional Talmudic society to assume commanding positions in an increasingly secularized and morally confused Christian world; they have done so most dramatically in anglophone societies, whose Protestantism represents Christianity in its least antisemitic form and whose prevalent political traditions are the most individualistic. From these favorable circumstances, according to MacDonald, two developments have emerged: Jews have made disproportionate contributions to science, the professions, and commerce; they have also contributed to the breakdown of traditional gentile culture.

MacDonald has devoted an entire volume to the latter activity, treating it as illustrating a Jewish double standard. While celebrating internationalism, socially critical individualism, and antiseptically secular public squares, Jews are forever making exceptions for themselves. Those who fail to recognize and exalt this exception earn the censure of Jewish spokesmen, who condemn them either as antisemites or as Jewish self-haters. MacDonald offers so many instances of this double standard that he belabors the obvious as he reaches back to the late 19th century for examples of Jewish civic leaders taking stands simultaneously on behalf of a supposed Jewish right to ethnic cohesion and a heterogeneous American nation. According to MacDonald, this inconsistency was typical of the relatively assimilated German Jews in the United States, even before the arrival of their Eastern European coreligionists.

The Jews' current view of the United States as a culturally evolving "global democracy" goes back a long way in the history of American Jewish organizations. Their preachments, far from having been inspired by the holocaust, were being propagated even before the Eastern European Jewish immigration of the early 20th century. And the wedding of these views to the justification of Jewish ethnic particularity, MacDonald convincingly demonstrates, contributed to pluralist agendas drawn up in the early part of the century. German Jewish humanist and socialist Horace Kallen expressed both a call for political internationalism and the hope that the United States would be filled with ethnic enclaves; MacDonald speculates that Kallen's Jewish identity and his sense of marginality in a gentile society contributed to his pluralist politics.

MacDonald notes the overlap between contemporary Jewish polemics against immigration restrictionists and those produced by Jewish organizations in the 1920's. Well before mid-century, Jews were savaging critics of liberal immigration policies as "un-American" and "Nordic supremacists." These invectives, coming from the opponents of the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, had also been directed against supporters of the naturalization acts of the 1920's. In both cases, public advocates for restriction emphasized cultural and economic, not biological, considerations in suggesting immigration policy for the United States. MacDonald shows how persistent the issue of open borders has been for his subjects. Jews have combined intervention on behalf of immigration and the demonization of immigration restrictionists with the promotion of "diversity education." The Anti-Defamation League has introduced and sponsored "A World of Difference Together," a program for public education which it is now exporting to Germany, Russia, and South Africa.

MacDonald does not present such advocacy as the misguided humanitarian design of those whose ancestors suffered dispersion and who are therefore receptive to later strangers. Instead, he locates Jewish support for multiculturalism in the context of an already venerable strategy: "de-ethnicizing" the once majority population while insisting on the right of Jews as righteous victims to persist as an ethnic cluster. Although the interpretive perspective seems correct, at least for the United States, two questions nevertheless go begging. Was Jewish intervention decisive for the immigration revolution of the mid-60's? If not, were other factors and circumstances critical to the success of that revolution—in which Jewish bullying and complaining played a secondary role? My guess from reading Chilton Williamson, Peter Brimelow, and Lawrence Auster is that the reassessment of immigration, especially from the Third World, was part of a general cultural change that beset Western societies and was pushed by the managerial state. While Jews contributed to cultural change and immigrationism energetically and disproportionately, they were far from constituting a sufficient cause. In countries without a conspicuous Jewish presence (say, Scandinavia and Germany), the same general cultural-political trends can be observed.

Two observations are in order regard-

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ing Jewish-American tendencies highlighted in MacDonald's third volume. First, assaults by American Jewish leaders against a Judeo-Christian core culture do not advance any rational Jewish interest. It is hard to see how Jews benefit from awarding preferential treatment to blacks and Hispanics, insisting that the Ten Commandments be removed from public schools, or denigrating the heritage of America's white majority; they would seem to have a greater interest in supporting a Western Christian society in the United States than in helping to subvert the remnants of one. Why should they wish to replace a world that amply rewards their talents with one that will likely be less tolerant of them? Or in the words of my friend Rabbi Meyer Schiller, "Do American Jews honestly believe that multicultural majorities will give them bigger Holocaust monuments?"

The second observation concerns the present state of Western Protestant societies. The "culture of critique" has done best among those whom James Kurth (himself a Presbyterian) calls "progressively deformed" Protestant peoples. Starting with the theologically based individualistic and anti-hierarchical bias of classical Protestantism, this deformation of Reformationist thought has expressed itself in various late-modernist obsessions, most of them linked to Protestant sources but without the sobering notions of Original Sin and divine redemption. These Protestant variants emphasize moral subjectivity and self-esteem, while replacing the concept of sin with that of social guilt.

Fits of self-rejection are also characteristic of deformed Protestants, and in the United States, Canada, Germany, and England, Protestant clergy have been in the forefront of those demanding atonement for racism, antisemitism, sexism, and homophobia. Ray Honeyford and Claus Nordbruch have documented the growing role of the English and German governments in pushing victimological agendas, and that of Protestant churches in conspicuously goading them on: In the United States, even the Religious Right is not immune to this mentality. For neoconservative philosopher Sidney Hook, MacDonald observes, "ethnic diversity" was a code word for democracy. He sees Hook's sleight of hand as yet another example of the Jewish attempt to destabilize outgroups, but in fact it represents something more significant: This is the way gentile conservatives, almost all professing Christians, wish to see their national and religious heritage. Hook took his place within the American conservative movement as a spokesman for American values.

No assessment of this multivolume work would be complete without commenting on MacDonald's assertions concerning Jewish cognitive superiority. His assumptions on the subject coincide with those of respected scholars, among them Hans Eysenck, who (shortly before his death in 1995) approved the presuppositions upon which MacDonald's first volume rests. Noting Jewish ascendancy in the financial and professional worlds, Ashkenazic Jewish overrepresentation among chess champions and Nobel Prize recipients, and the continuing standard deviation between Ashkenazic Jewish and white gentile I.Q. scores, MacDonald and Eysenck attribute Jewish accomplishments to successful reproductive strategy. Other explanations, however, are available. According to researcher J.R. Flynn, mean I.Q. across ethnic groups has risen by approximately 0.2 percent each year. This steady rise can be linked to environmental factors, particularly the frequency of test-taking and exposure to test materials among the young. The Flynn effect may also point to environmental reasons for displays of Jewish intelligence during the last several generations. Jewish urbanization, professional aggressiveness, and the repeated exposure of Jewish children to test-taking may all be leading to the prize-gathering coups noted by Eysenck and MacDonald. Those who push themselves forward, whether on research teams, in business organizations, or as applicants for professional schools, will do better, *de paribus ceteris*, than those who (like my Pennsylvania Dutch neighbors) have been taught not to stand out in a crowd.

Within the same civilization, moreover, ethnic groups and subgroups have been culturally productive for a time, and then declined. Lowland Scots, Northern Italians, Swabian Germans, and American WASPs have all waned culturally, and in other ways, after making remarkable contributions to learning and the arts. The theory put forth by Arnold Toynbee—that peoples rise to greatness by responding to particular challenges—may shed light here. Furthermore, Jewish cooperation and Jewish competitive strategies as explained by MacDonald obviously account, at least in part, for present Jewish successes.

For me, the most engrossing part of MacDonald's trilogy is a long, learned section in the third volume entitled, "The Frankfurt School and Pathologization." *The Authoritarian Personality*, published in 1950 by the American Jewish Committee, bore the marks of the Frankfurt School. Its editors and contributors, particularly Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, were the fathers of the school's Critical Theory, and it is hard to study that turgid exploration of "fascist" and "pseudo-democratic" personality-types without noticing its social point of reference: Adorno, Horkheimer, Ilse Frenkel, and Paul Lazarsfeld were all Frankfurt groupies before they contributed to this collective enterprise. So were Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse, who wrote supporting puff pieces. The pivotal themes in *The Authoritarian Personality*, as emphasized by MacDonald, were nothing new to those who assisted in the project: Rather, they represented the same complaints directed against Western—not only German—society by the youthful radicals grouped around Adorno at the University of Frankfurt in the early 30's. From Frankfurt, these "anti-Nazis" emigrated to the United States; later, they reestablished their ideas in postwar Germany in the context of Allied denazification. Little attention was paid to the fact that the proposed antidotes for Nazism were not exactly disease-specific: They targeted anything that gave cohesion to middle-class families and societies.

MacDonald argues that the "pathologization" of normal gentile society in *The Authoritarian Personality* foreshadows today's coerced political correctness. The social criticism of the Frankfurt School implies the need for a powerful regime of socialist administrators to level inequalities and resocialize reactionary personalities. MacDonald links this call for massive social engineering to characteristically Jewish concerns and anxieties shared by its overwhelmingly Jewish formulators: The gentile Other would remain—or so it was assumed—a prowling presence absent reconstruction of the surrounding society. The plea for resocialization in 1950 continued to resonate among Jewish "social scientists" who shared Adorno's fears; both it and the rhetoric in which it was couched live on in the efforts of Jewish organizations to identify traditional Christian values with incipient "fascism." c

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The Displaced Person

by Jeffrey Meyers

Greene on Capri: A Memoir
by Shirley Hazzard
New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux; 151 pp., $22.00

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"The depravity of Tiberius, or the salacity of Suetonius," wrote Anthony Burgess, "had left its mark on an island all sodomy, lesbianism, scandal and cosmopolitan artiness." For the last 150 years, writers have been attracted to the natural beauty as well as the lechery of Capri—20 miles across the bay from Naples, four miles long, and with a permanent population of 12,000. Hans Christian Andersen, Ivan Turgenev, Tristan Corbière, Axel Munthe, Gerhart Hauptmann, Booth Tarkington, Ivan Bunin, and Rainer Maria Rilke, among others, visited the island.

Joseph Conrad, who spent time on Capri in 1905, said the air was too stimulating and complained of the hot winds, violent contrasts, and sexual depravity:

> Too much ozone they say: too exciting and that's why no lung patients are allowed to come here. . . . This place here, this climate, this sirocco, this transmontana, these flat roofs, these sheer rocks, this blue sea—are impossible. . . . The scandals of Capri—atrocious, unspeakable, amusing, scandals international, cosmopolitan and biblical.

D.H. Lawrence lived on Capri for two months in 1920, hated the place, and called it "a stewpot of semi-literary cats."

The Australian-American novelist Shirley Hazzard met Graham Greene in the Gran Caffé in Capri in the late 1960's when she supplied the last line of a poem by Browning that he'd begun to quote but couldn't quite complete. Her slight but charming, engaging, and handsomely designed memoir of Greene suggests

> what it was to be habitually in his company, to walk with him in a street, to exchange opinions, literature, laughter, and something of one's self; to observe his moods and responses, suffer his temper, and witness his attachments; to see him grow old.

Her book belongs to the same valuable genre of personal recollections as Maxim Gorky's *Reminiscences of Tolstoy, Chekhov and Andreyev* (1919) and J.R. Acklerley's *E.M. Forster: A Memoir* (1970). Hazzard, remembering "long and well, and without prompting, what is truly interesting," rarely made notes after her talks with Greene, though she occasionally recorded precise details of an evening spent with him. Her style is usually vivid and elegant. But Greene would have disapproved of her lapses: into cliché ("the Second World War convulsed the globe; calling populations to arms"), Jamesian ponderosity ("In certain enkindled moods, the inconsequential supposition of a shared opinion might be angrily repelled as importunate"), or unnecessary obfuscation, as when she describes an Italian publisher who "was killed—apparently by an explosive device related to Feltrinelli's own clandestine adventures." (In fact, he blew himself up while trying to destroy a pylon.) And Hazzard's observations at times require more substance or elucidation. Her list of great 19th-century fictional heroines excludes Anna Karenina. She remarks that Greene liked the name of the Sicilian wine Corvo, which means "crow" in Italian, without explaining that it reminded him of Frederick Rolfe, Baron Corvo, whom he admired as a writer and called "so amazingly unreasonable." She was baffled when Greene enigmatically compared himself to Flaubert, though both authors had a penetrating vision of evil in the world.

In 1948, Greene bought his house on Anacapri, *Il Rosaio* (the rosebush), with all its contents, for the bargain price of £3,000—his proceeds from the film of *The Third Man*. The house, with a fine cultural pedigree, had been a refuge for the Czech politician Jan Masaryk and for the writers Gorky, Norman Douglas, and Francis Brett Young. After the Great War, it had been sold to the novelist Compton Mackenzie, who had invited Lawrence to Capri. Greene's austere studio, inside a walled garden, had an old divan, a chair, a table, and a portable typewriter. In that refuge within a retreat on an island, he faithfully wrote his daily 350 words, breaking off—like Hemingway—at the point where it would be easier to resume the next day.

On Capri, the habits of the restless wanderer were as regular as those of Immanuel Kant. He wrote in the morning, took a walk in the late afternoon, and in the evening had a drink in the piazza and dinner at his favorite restaurant. And yet, he told Hazzard, Capri "isn't really my kind of place." When asked, "what is your kind of place?" he cryptically responded, "well, not Antibes"—where he had a flat on the sea front. Spiritually and physically a displaced person who loved the intoxication of motion, he was bored by the tame, overcivilized Florence and Rome, much more at home in Paraguay or Phnom Penh. *Il Rosaio* was originally a refuge for Greene and his American mistress, Catherine Walston, who held him "in thrall between rapture and the rack for fifteen years . . . brought him to the verge of insanity and suicide," and inspired the heroine of *The End of the Affair*. By the time Hazzard met him, Greene had another mistress, the French Yvonne Cloetta, who—unlike Catherine—idolized him. Hazzard does not mention that both women were married and had several children, which conve-

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niently limited Greene's involvement with them.

Hazzard writes that "the anxiety of men, women, and children living close to the bone and the abyss is a climate of the early fiction, which frequently takes place in wet, cold, sunless settings." And she shrewdly notes that many ridiculous characters in his novels are called "Henry," "a byword for naiveté and impotence" as well as Greene's real first name. But her comments are never as acute as Orwell's devastating criticism of the hero's suicide in *The Heart of the Matter*: "If Scobie believed in Hell, he would not risk going there merely to spare the feelings of a couple of neurotic women." Greene's novels, filled with spiritual malaise and flirtations with God, put him "on Colonel Gadaffi's cultural black list with D.H. Lawrence and curiously enough Henry James."

Greene liked to use old-fashioned expressions like "fall guy" and "what swank." Recalling the transformation of mores after the Lady Chatterley trial in 1959, he wittily remarked that, "among publishers, indecency was now becoming a competition rather than an obstacle." Once in close touch with the world's pulse, in old age Greene came understandably to loathe "the self-engrossed lassitude of hippies and yippies": "I would like to take a machine gun to the young," he exclaimed. His decline seemed to match the decline of the island—part of a sad but inevitable spectacle I witnessed in the Spanish village where I lived at the time. As early as 1907, Rilke lamented the blight of hideous new buildings which, after the Great War, was compounded by Capri's characteristic "indolence, near-nudity, and egoistic hedonism," often ending in tragedy and suicide. As tourists invaded the island, fishermen abandoned the sea and peasants left the land for more profitable if less satisfying enterprises. "Solitary cliffside walks," Hazzard notes, "fell into dangerous decay, while green sites considered sacrosanct were obliterated by new hotels."

Hazzard admires Greene and understands that he required agitation as a defense against boredom. But she is also sharply critical of his increasingly rude behavior, which she contrasts to the courtesy and kindness of the aesthete Harold Acton (who makes a cameo appearance). Greene felt compelled "to foment trouble, to shake up tameness and disturb the peace . . . [and] often appeared indifferent to harm done, hurt inflicted, trust eroded." If she tried to avoid his evil temper, he asked why she stayed away; if she appeared as usual, he tended to hector and upset her. On one occasion, prompted by his disapproval of Hazzard's habit of feeding stray cats, "Graham flared into mindless rage. These were the worst moments I ever had with him, irrational and cruel: paroxysm of the playground."

Greene called himself "a Catholic agnostic" and told her that he hadn't been to confession for more than 20 years. But, she felt, he found excitement in sin, "in guilt and fear, even in being unmasked." He made his last visit to Capri in 1988, to which he was unable to return; ten months before his death in 1991, he wrote me that he had been forced to cancel a trip to England, adding, "my health is too bad for me to receive visitors" in Switzerland. Weary of the world, his last words before lapsing into a coma were "I want to go."

Jeffrey Meyers, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, will publish his literary memoir, Privileged Moments: Encounters With Writers *(University of Wisconsin Press), in September.*

A Marathon

by Lawrence Dugan

Tired runners all over the place,
An occasional happy face.
A high school friend waves hello,
The rest might be shoveling snow
They seem so tired, so intent,
Absorbed in groups to come unbent
From the race, the amateur strain,
The release from pleasure and pain.
They fill the park with dull faces
And colorful shirts, trading places
As they fight off cramps and stretch,
And the sicker ones even retch
Into the street, while the older
Still run, shoulder to shoulder,
The names of banks on their backs,
The Irish flag or union jacks,
An old peace group's faded dove
Or just a bar they used to love.
I thread through them to church
Newly pulled from another lurch
By two more jobs—part-time teaching.
Everywhere yuppies are reaching
For water, something cold to drink,
Then heads bent down to knees to think.

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by Samuel Francis

A New Majority?

"This way to the egress," P.T. Barnum used to direct the stooges stupid enough to buy tickets to his traveling shows of bunco and blather. The "egress," of course, was the exit to the street, where the stooges should have stayed. Would that we had a P.T. Barnum today who could direct us to an egress from the political hall of mirrors in which we have foolishly allowed ourselves to be trapped.

The latest clown to dance through the hall is Sen. John McCain of Arizona, who entertained the nation and quite befuddled much of its political class with his antics during the presidential primaries last winter. Before McCain's victory in New Hampshire over Texas Gov. George W. Bush, most observers predicted he would indeed win there but nowhere else, though no one anticipated a victory as smashing as the one he actually pulled off. No sooner had the Arizona solon won in New Hampshire than an entire regiment of journalists and commentators fell into a swoon. Mr. McCain beat Mr. Bush by an impressive 18 percentage points, and by the following day, some pundits—particularly neoconservative chatterbox Bill Kristol—had glimpsed nothing less than the bright dawn of political revolution.

Writing in the *Washington Post* the very day after the New Hampshire primary, Mr. Kristol announced that "It is John McCain and Bill Bradley who each now have a chance that occurs only once a generation—to articulate a new governing agenda for a potential new majority." So much for the prophetic insights of Mr. Kristol, but while he was almost unique in thinking Bill Bradley could shatter the Clinton-Gore juggernaut, he was by no means alone in trumpeting what Mr. McCain was about to accomplish. A few days later, his fellow neoconservative Charles Krauthammer also started booming Mr. McCain, assuring us that, although Mr. Bush was "more reliably conservative," it was Mr. McCain who was the sure winner. To the neocon mind, of course, that pretty much clinched it. Why the hell would anyone support a candidate he actually agrees with on principles when he can go with an alternative who's sure to grab the power? "The question for Republicans," the intrepid Krauthammer assured us, "is not who will make the better president but who is more likely to *be* president."

The neoconservative fascination with Mr. McCain, however, had only just begun. As the Mother of All Neocons herself, Midge Decter, told a writer for the *New Republic*, "We decided that we liked McCain, then we came up with our justifications." Nor indeed was it only the neocons who signed on with the McCain fan club. Liberal John Judis was soon scribbling in the *New Republic* about the "new voting bloc" that Mr. McCain had uncovered that could carry the country to a wave of "reforms" analogous to those of the Progressive era. In the *Washington Post*, political reporter Thomas Edsall glowed that the McCain campaign "has revealed the weakening of the conservative Republicanism that dominated national politics from the late 1960's into the mid-1990's, according to a growing number of GOP strategists." The first such "strategist" Mr. Edsall quoted to prove his point was none other than Mr. Kristol himself, followed by a McCain supporter and the ubiquitous Paul Weyrich, who last year was advising conservatives to get out of politics altogether. By the time of the South Carolina primary, the chatterpunks of the Beltway had not only all but convinced themselves that Mr. McCain would be the next president but also written the epitaph of the American right.

But as South Carolina proved, the epitaph was rather premature. Mr. Bush smashed Mr. McCain there precisely by relying on the very "conservative Republicanism" that supposedly had vanished into the political gloaming. He declined to demand the removal of the Confederate flag from the state capitol building, while Mr. McCain blundered, at first denouncing the flag as a "symbol of racism and slavery" and then more or less retracting that remark and agreeing with the Texas governor. (The retraction did not help; exit polls showed that 61 percent of South Carolinians who support the flag voted for Mr. Bush.) The governor also huddled close to the religious right that has remained more powerful in South Carolina than in many other areas, and he constantly depicted himself as the "real conservative" and his rival as a "liberal" interloper. Mr. Bush, of course, is no more a serious conservative than Mr. McCain or even Mr. Gore, but his own political image was still sufficiently malleable that he and his shape-shifters could twist and mold it into the forms they wished to be perceived. In the event, the voters saw what they were shown, and subsequent exit polls in later primaries showed that Mr. Bush consistently won the rank-and-file members of his own party. Mr. McCain did well for a few more primaries only because he managed to attract some union members and independents, but his claims of constructing a "new coalition" or a "new majority" fell flat. As political pollster Andrew Kohut wrote in the *New York Times*, "Across the country, McCain backers do not share values or care strongly about the same issues, and they are not drawn from a common demographic base." Indeed, "moral values" were more of a concern for Mr. McCain's supporters in New York than his much touted (and imitated) "campaign finance reform." The "conservative Republicanism" that Mr. Edsall had embalmed so easily remained sufficiently powerful to reject Mr. McCain decisively and communicate to any politician or pundit willing to hear it that the American right at the grassroots level remains so strong that it cannot safely be ignored or dismissed.

Nevertheless, the epitaph writers did have a point. In his op-ed in the *Washington Post* the day after New Hampshire, Mr. Kristol remarked: "leaderless, rudderless, and issueless, the conservative movement, which accomplished great things over the past quarter-century, is finished." Mr. Kristol is usually wrong, but this time he was actually half right. If the primaries proved anything, it was that the "conservative movement" is indeed dead, though the world hangs breathless to learn of the "great things" it ever accomplished. As Mr. Kristol remarked, the three GOP candidates identified with the "conservative movement" this year—Gary Bauer, Alan Keyes, and Steve Forbes—all together received fewer votes in New Hampshire than Mr. Bush won in second place, and most of them dropped out in the next few weeks. In lat-

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er remarks to the *Post*, Mr. Kristol repeated the same sentiment—"The orthodox conservative movement has collapsed," he told Mr. Edsall, and "if there is to be a conservative future, which I for one hope there is, it's not going to be shaped by the old conservative movement." Let us leave aside for the nonce the subject of what kind of "conservative future" Mr. Kristol hopes for as well as the very interesting matter of the crucial role he and his fellow neoconservatives played in causing the collapse of a coherent, intellectually sophisticated, and politically serious conservatism, and dwell instead on the larger point that the "movement" is indeed defunct.

Yet the dismal performance of "movement conservatives" in the primaries this year was by no means the first time they had flopped. In 1996, the campaign of "movement" favorite Phil Gramm collapsed before it even arrived in New Hampshire, while other "movement" stallions—Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, Newt Gingrich, Steve Forbes, Pat Robertson—either never got out of their stalls or stumbled and fell quickly. Mr. Kemp was momentarily resuscitated for the Dole campaign, but he proved to be just as much of a dud as his critics had always predicted.

Mr. Kristol, then, is entirely correct that the "conservative movement" is no longer, if it ever was, a serious national political force, though he seems to be wrong about why it is not. The reason he offers for its collapse is the disappearance of the voting bloc on which it was based and the emergence of the "new political majority" that he spies trampling down the vineyards behind Mr. McCain. This "new political majority" is not attached to the principles of the "movement" and will not support candidates reflecting those principles. Instead, it will drive the campaigns of "reformers" like Mr. McCain, who began charting "a new governing agenda" that, as Mr. Kristol and his sidekick David Brooks described it in the *Weekly Standard*, was far more friendly to Big Government and hostile to religious commitment than the old conservatism had ever been. In the course of their description, it became clear that they were merely ascribing to Mr. McCain and to his largely fictitious "new majority" what they as neocons desperately wanted to see.

The major political problem that neoconservatism has always faced has been its own lack of a mass following. Since the late 1970's, the neocons have proved themselves expert in the courtly arts of intrigue, back-stabbing, and palace politics, and once they had attached themselves to Ronald Reagan and, through the gullibility of "movement conservatives," had been welcomed within the palace itself, they advanced quickly to dominant positions in the foundations, magazines, and think tanks that managed and financed Conservatism, Inc. But it was Reagan or the senior George Bush or the Republicans who actually attracted the mass following that kept the neocon courtiers employed and enjoying at least the semblance of political power. As long as they remained attached to a successful political figure who could get elected without their assistance, they remained also at his mercy and were unable to achieve the total dominance their passion for power craved. Now, with Mr. McCain galloping on the horizon with his supposed "new political majority" behind him and a "new governing agenda" dangling at his hip that excluded the anti-Big Government conservatives, the religious right, and the neo-isolationists, it suddenly seemed that the days of dependence were nearly over and the hour of the neoconservative beast had come round at last.

The collapse of the McCain crusade dashed these dreams. Mr. McCain's temporary success in New Hampshire did not prove that there was such a majority nor that the political right was dead, though the lackluster performance of the "movement" candidates did reveal their own political irrelevance and that of the "movement" from which they sprouted. Mr. Bush's success, on the other hand, based as it was on his appeal to the right, shows that—at least at the grassroots level where voters really vote and never a neocon trod—the right remains very much alive. To say the "conservative movement" is dead, defunct, and politically irrelevant, on the one hand, and that the political right at the unorganized, grassroots level remains alive, strong, and even essential for political victory, on the other, is not contradictory. On the contrary, movement conservatism failed to become a serious political force not because it missed the boat captained by any "new majority" or "new coalition" but because it failed to recognize the real political majority that still exists and which Mr. Bush manipulated to gain the GOP nomination.

The real majority—it is not literally a majority of the voting population but a large block of it—is simply the white, mainly ethnic, working- and middle-class ranks of American society, and the way to win it is not by invoking the deathless platitudes and banalities of "movement conservatism" or the tendentious "Inside Manhattan" policy-wonkery offered by the neoconservatives. The way to win Middle Americans is to communicate to them that you, as a candidate and a public leader, understand that they and their way of life are under siege, that the ruling class of the country in alliance with its underclass is besieging them, and that you are willing to ally with them against their enemies. Neoconservatives don't get this and never will, which is why they do not and never will have a mass following of any kind. Movement conservatism never got this either, because it and its spokesmen were more interested in proving their pet points about their various idols than in doing something useful to protect and conserve the people and culture of the nation. Joe McCarthy, for all his shortcomings, did get it, as did George Wallace. Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan also got it, at least to the extent that they understood how to use it to get themselves elected. Young Mr. Bush, if he did not understand it before the recent primaries, should have learned it by now, though it will not be surprising if he failed to do so. Since Reagan, no successful political leader on the right has shown that he understands it, and today the entire political class, right as well as left, has schooled itself to miss it and to talk about just about anything other than the class and cultural war that is being waged against Middle America.

The blunt and brutal truth is that if no one is willing or able to wage war back, then the war will be lost, and that may in fact be happening. The abandonment of issues relevant to Middle American survival by most political leaders and opinionmakers means that the war is not being fought and the issues within it are not being defined adequately. There is still a chance in this last election of the century that someone will emerge who is able and willing to fight the war. But if he doesn't emerge this year, the best plan for Middle Americans and those who side with them in the future will be to look for the egress and run like hell for it. c

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Letter From Paris

by Curtis Cate

Exhibitionism as a Way of Life

◆

In mid-January, those Parisians (like myself) who are still interested in literary matters were aroused from the smug complacency in which we had been wallowing for several weeks, as dazed survivors of the millennial earthquake and the pyrotechnic cancan put on by a shameless Eiffel Tower, by an unexpected thunderclap. The thunderclap was ignited by Jean Daniel, founder and editor-in-chief of France's leading left-wing weekly, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, with a sensational cover informing us that "After twenty years of Purgatory SARTRE (in huge red letters) is coming back." But—and this was not the least paradoxical feature of this surprising resurrection—the photo illustrating this affirmation showed a somewhat stooped Jean-Paul Sartre, as though burdened by the sheer weight of his existential cogitations, trudging away from, rather than toward, the reader.

The prime mover of this literary "happening"—its Vulcan, if not its Jupiter—was not Jean Daniel, the self-crowned king of France's "progressive" intelligentsia, but rather its most flamboyant spokesman, the most dazzling of the country's once new and young but now increasingly middle-aged *philosophes*, a virtuoso of epistemological dialectics, and (if I may be forgiven for lapsing into French) a veritable *saltimbanque de l'exégèse* (an acrobat in the sleight-of-hand art of exegesis) named Bernard-Henri Lévy. And the thundering bolt with which he aroused us from our after-the-binge somnolence was a 650-page book entitled *Le Siècle de Sartre* ("Sartre's Century"), most curiously illustrated on the cover—one more paradox!—by a photograph of the famous philosopher, shown about to remove an inseparable cigarette from that garrulous mouth, for once elegantly dressed with a white shirt collar and dark tie, and, not least of all, an impeccably cuff-linked shirtsleeve: as though to remind us that this *enfant terrible* of modern philosophy and self-proclaimed advocate of the cause of the downtrodden and oppressed was, after all, or perhaps one should say *before* so much else, a bourgeois—like the best (or the worst) of us.

In literary, as in political, matters, it is always hazardous to speak of "inevitable" happenings. Particularly when what is involved is a 660-page book that even a genius could not have put together in a couple of months, and which, by the author's own admission, was the product of an intense intellectual "cohabitation" lasting all of three years. But from the moment (I think it was in late summer of last year) that some dimwits working for *Time* magazine decided that the looming *fin de siècle* could not be celebrated properly without the collective "wisdom" of its editors and readers selecting a single "Man of the Century," it was inevitable that some frustrated French super-patriot would come up with a French candidate for this grotesque distinction. And sure enough, that master of the political platitude, President Jacques Chirac, whose simplest statements now have to be read from a prepared text rather than uttered off-the-cuff, again demonstrated his genius for the commonplace by promptly proposing—yes, you have guessed it!—Charles de Gaulle. It was no less inevitable that, faced with the catastrophic prospect of a major cultural devaluation, someone else should come up with the name of a Frenchman capable of symbolizing the luminous intelligence of the 20th century. And so, out of his magician's sleeve, Bernard-Henri Lévy pulled an authentically French rabbit: Jean-Paul Sartre.

If the January 13 issue of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, containing an interview with the author and a number of extracts from "Sartre's Century," was the first thunderbolt launched in this mediatic blitzkrieg, it was quickly followed by a second and even louder bang, when the author-conjurer was invited to take part in a special program exclusively devoted to Sartre by France's most prestigious literary talk show, *Bouillon de culture*.

In France, as in the United States, literary reputations (many of them bogus) are now made on the basis of histrionic ability, talent for self-advocacy, and, of course, the quick-witted *esprit* that is particularly appreciated in the land that produced Voltaire. The successful author, like so much else in this age of self-serving theatricality, must become an actor, a salesman, a dramatic simplifier, and peddler of his (or her) wares. I must confess that I often find these talk-show sessions excruciatingly painful, so visibly embarrassed are the timid souls (novelists in particular) who, in a couple of minutes, have to provide fast-food résumés of their tales, plots, or themes, and so insufferably pleased with themselves are those who are narcissistically inclined. This said, I must take my hat off to one Frenchman, Bernard Pivot, a talk-show wizard who, over a period of 30 years or more, has raised many of these sessions to the level of high interrogative art.

Years ago, when he began his Friday-evening *Apostrophes* talk show on France's second (partly state-subsidized) channel, Pivot had no idea of what a standard feature it would soon become in the landscape of French literature. The main reason is that, unlike others who have tried their hand at this game, Pivot actually reads (or has clever assistants read) the newly published books of the authors he interrogates (usually four or five at a time). How he manages to read so many books without becoming dazed or dizzy from overwork, and how he manages, with the aid of a few slips of paper, to extract the most pertinent quotations from each book discussed, is a recurring mystery, not to say a weekly miracle. But manage it he does—with the most extraordinary aplomb. And, indeed, with such authority and prestige that Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn once invited him to come and interview him at his home in Vermont.

When, after 20 years of literary interrogations, Bernard Pivot decided that he had had enough, he chose to end his long *Apostrophes* series with a one-man interview accorded to a self-sacrificing non-author: Georges Lubin, the meticulous collector and editor of George Sand's letters (4,000 inventoried letters when he began; 18,000, published in 25 volumes, by the time he was through). It was a fitting finale and a well-earned tribute to painstaking scholarship. But the

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news that Pivot was ending his long series of Friday evening talk shows caused consternation in most publishing offices in Paris. In a doomsday article published in *Le Monde*, its leading literary critic, Bertrand Poirot-Delpech, described Pivot's announced departure as a national calamity, since, almost single-handedly, he had with his Friday evening talk shows kept alive an interest in buying and reading books which, without him, might well wither away into collective indifference.

In the end, Pivot relented, and *Apostrophes* vanished from the television screens, replaced by a new, more "flexible" talk show, in which film stars, popular singers, actors, scientists, doctors, politicians turned authors, and of course writers and poets of every kind were invited to submit to intelligent interrogation in a new Friday evening feature cleverly entitled *Bouillon de culture* (a standard laboratory term for the bubbling liquid in which bacteriologists study the germination and cultivation of different kinds of germs).

The *Bouillon de culture* session to which Bernard-Henri Lévy was invited, along with three other authors who had also felt the need to write a book about Jean-Paul Sartre, fully lived up to its bubbling name and effervescent connotation. With his sharply cut profile, mobile eyebrows forever frowning and unfrowning, a floating mane of dark hair, restless orchestra-conductor's hands, and an imperious, air-jabbing index finger, BHL (as he is now popularly called) was more brilliantly emphatic than ever, even if at times far from convincing. For the Sartre, or more precisely the (differently faceted) Sartres he was explaining and defending—warts, defects, deceptions, and all—was the same Sartre against whose intellectual tyranny—in praising Brezhnev's U.S.S.R., Mao Tse-tung's China, and Fidel Castro's Cuba—Bernard-Henri Lévy, André Glucksmann, and other young French philosophers had revolted in the 1970's. Without actually extolling this famous phrase, Lévy "understood" those who, in the 1950's and 60's, used to say that they would "rather be wrong with Jean-Paul Sartre than right with Raymond Aron" (or Albert Camus). For what in the "foggy folly of the epoch" in which the philosopher lives is truly "right" rather than "wrong"? Even Raymond Aron was not infallible. And what, after all, was Raymond Aron—a relatively straightforward professor of sociology and political science—compared to the omni-curious, omni-creating, omni-devouring, omni-experimenting Jean-Paul Sartre? In short, Sartre's errors were part of his polymathic genius—as novelist, playwright, essayist, journalist, philosopher, tireless conversationalist, and, not least of all, an insatiably curious *homme à femmes*, or more exactly a *homme à jeunes filles*, whom he liked to "savor" with the relish of a gourmet, while maintaining a "necessary" (as opposed to "contingent") friendship with his *Castor* (Eager Beaver), Simone de Beauvoir. A polymathic superman of this kind—like Napoleon, Sartre was almost a midget—has a divine right to be wrongheaded. Like so many others, only more so. He also has a divine right to deceive—others, even more than himself.

Ever since he publicly enunciated this basic *modus operandi* with the immortal words "*il ne faut pas désespérer Billancourt*" (One must not drive the automobile workers of the Renault plant on the Seine island of Billancourt to despair by telling them the ugly truth about concentration camps, purges, and other horrors in the U.S.S.R.), we knew that Sartre had arrogated to himself the divine right to tell fibs. But what I did not know until I watched this *Bouillon de culture* was that, from 1962 to 1968, Sartre was having an affair with a lovely young Russian damsel who, Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's U.S.S.R. being what it was, dutifully reported their pillow-cased or unpillow-cased conversations to the KGB. Sartre, it seems, was fully aware of it. Indeed, the two contingent lovers joyously connived to make Sartre's complaints and private diatribes against life in the U.S.S.R. as blunt and unvarnished as possible—Sartre, who was never happier than when wielding a pen, going as far as to record his "seditious" sentiments in some 800 pages of letters dispatched to his beloved. Although this was a very hush-hush "plot," a friend of Sartre's got wind of what was going on, and when he asked Jean-Paul why, if he felt this way about conditions in the U.S.S.R., he did not proclaim it openly, he was given this exquisitely Sartrian reply: "Not on your life! If I did such a stupid thing, I would be praised in the *Figaro*" (France's most respectably bourgeois daily). And for a bona fide, dyed-in-red-wool French intellectual of the 1960's, to be praised in the *Figaro* was tantamount to betrayal of the proletariat.

Yes, not only does a polymathic superman of thinking have a divine right to deceive others as well as himself; he also has the right to stage a personal "cultural revolution" by dynamiting his own philosophy and blowing it sky-high. This of course requires real courage, a special kind of heroism. For it is one thing to *épater le bourgeois* (dumbfound the bourgeois)—this is virtually second nature to any bona fide French left-wing intellectual—but it is quite another thing to dumbfound and dismay the members of one's ideological "family." Which is precisely what Sartre set out to do, in March 1980, a few weeks before his death, when he began sending *Le Nouvel Observateur* a series of "subversive" dialogues with a friend (whom he chose to rename Benny Lévy), and which indicated, to the consternation of his closest friends, that he was parting company with what up until that moment had been regarded as *his* philosophy.

Faced with this extraordinary case of philosophical *hara-kiri*, what is Bernard-Henri Lévy's reaction? One of pained disapproval? Of regret? Of disbelief? Not at all. Quite the contrary. But let us listen to his reaction, gushing forth spontaneously in a torrent of tumbling, somersaulting words, as recorded by a *Nouvel Observateur* reporter:

> What an extraordinary adventure, after all! Like Lacan, like Mao, Sartre, in the evening of his life, decides to smash everything. To the great dismay of his intellectual family, he chooses to dynamite Sartrism. He takes a bet—what a magnificent event!—on a new youth and lays the cornerstones of a third edifice [the first being Heideggerian "existentialism," the second his belated espousal of the cause of the downtrodden and oppressed, of Franz Fanon's "the damned of the earth"]. In a word, he again sets out on the roadways of his freedom. Finally, with Benny Lévy acting as a smuggler's guide or mediator, he effects, without saying so clearly, a strange philosophical junction with Emmanuel Levinas. All of this is stupendously romantic: a young Maoist chieftain plots his last conspiracy and passes on to the old philosopher [i.e., the aging Sartre] concepts—those of Levinas—with which his dismantled thinking is going to be rebuilt. The demoli-

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tion and the reconstruction of one of the strongest philosophies of the twentieth century. And then finally, a haphazard and yet necessary, a clandestine and yet avowed meeting with . . . Judaism. This was not of course a conversion. But Sartre, having recovered his philosophical appetite, devours with voracity and as usual makes another's philosophy his own. He kneads it. He transforms it. He has the nerve to become a young man again, causing grief or wrath in his own tribe. Very young or very old, as is well known, he is born once more in the same life and reverts to the dandyism of his origins. What a story! What panache!

"*Quelle histoire! Quel panache!*" There are words which, spontaneously erupting in quickly uttered speech, reveal more than entire sentences, paragraphs, or chapters. What *panache*! One of Edmond Rostand's favorite words, and thus too of his flamboyant hero, Cyrano de Bergerac. A favorite word with arch-romantics who would like nothing better than forever to be up front, on the breach, and, if only for a fleeting moment, living dangerously. As Bernard-Henri Lévy did and was ostentatiously seen to be doing, some years ago, in strife-torn Sarajevo.

Like Alfred de Musset, who spent much of his life regretting that he had been born too late to serve under the great Napoleon, Bernard-Henri Lévy has often given one the impression of being an intellectual in desperate search of a noble cause—such as that of the Spanish Republicans which, in 1936, transformed André Malraux, the dynamic novelist, into a dynamic "man of action."

A quarter of a century ago, in 1977, Bernard-Henri Lévy established himself overnight as the most dazzling practitioner of philosophical interpretation, with a book cleverly entitled *La Barbarie à visage humain* ("Barbarism with a human face")—clearly inspired by Alexander Dubcek's "socialism with a human face" and perhaps too by the "Charter '77" movement of protestation launched by dissident Czech and Slovak intellectuals in Gustav Husak's "normalized" Czechoslovakia. Although it had been preceded, seven years before, by Jean-Marie Benoist's *Marx est mort* ("Marx is dead"), Lévy's book, with its strikingly topical title, was an immediate best-seller. It offered hundreds of thousands of young readers "proof" of what they had vaguely begun to realize, so blatant was now the evidence: that Marxism had lost its revolutionary fire and, as in Brezhnev's U.S.S.R., had sunk into a state of bureaucratic lethargy. But how many of those who bought the book really understood it? I doubt that the ratio was as high as one in ten. But, in a sense, "comprehension" was not what was demanded of the readers. They were invited to admire the author's elegiac lamentation bewailing a socialistic "God that had failed"—one which, as Lévy noted with stenographic concision in the preface, was "born in Paris in 1848, dead in Paris in 1968." In strict historical fact socialism, unquestionably a French invention, was first propounded in the late 1820's. When Karl Marx published his *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, he had left Paris and was already living in London. But never mind the historical pedantry! What mattered then, and still matters most today for Bernard-Henri Lévy, is the lyrical *élan*, the polemical verve, the poetic *soufflé*, the rhetorical *emphase* (those untranslatable components of French revolutionary grandiloquence), adroitly mixed into a spicy *bouillabaisse* of philosophical ingredients borrowed from every conceivable name-dropped source—from Plato, Spinoza, and that arch-romantic dreamer, Jean Jacques Rousseau, down to Marxism's last great French advocate, Louis Althusser, Gilles Deleuze, and the inevitable Martin Heidegger, who, in Lévy's *Siècle de Sartre*, is declared, *urbi et orbi* and as so self-evident as to require no proof, the greatest philosopher of the 20th century.

(To refresh my memory, I have just taken another look at *La Barbarie à visage humain*—and, sure enough, in the first 30 pages the word "ontology" is repeated no less than four times, enough to persuade the most skeptical of readers that BHL is a serious philosopher who has really done his homework.)

It would be paying Bernard-Henri Lévy too high an honor to credit him with having made fashionable a philosophical style aimed at swift rhetorical brilliance rather than at plodding profundity. The romantic-revolutionary vocabulary goes back at least as far as Jules Michelet, the historian-prophet of the French Revolution, and was provided with its first motivating slogan by Danton, with his galvanizing exhortation: "*l'audace, encore l'audace, toujours l'audace*!" And what could be more audacious, at any rate, for a sedentary thinker like Sartre than to make one's principal aim in life the *épatement* (dumbfounding) of the smug and intolerably self-satisfied bourgeois? Sartre's early infatuation with Heidegger's philosophy may well have been due to its almost total opacity for the ordinary middle-class reader, thus conveniently made to look like a dunce, compared to the "progressive" wielders of an admirably esoteric vocabulary. Inevitably, however, this got Sartre into serious trouble when he made himself the philosophical spokesman of France's "proletarians," who turned out to be even dimmer in their incomprehension of existentialo-Heideggerian terminology than the most obtuse bourgeois reader.

I shall never forget the Master's stammering embarrassment when, having consented to "meet the people" in a jam-packed amphitheater of the Sorbonne during the "May revolution" of 1968, he was asked by a genuine proletarian in the audience, "Why, Monsieur Sartre, do you use a language that we workers cannot understand?" It was a good question and one which, despite his verbal brilliance and an expositional style that is far less woolly and long-winded than that of Sartre, Bernard-Henri Lévy has so far been unable to answer, since he feels the compelling need to dazzle his guilt-ridden middle-class readers who are allowed to atone for the "original sin" of having been born into a relatively well-to-do

LIBERAL ARTS

YOUR CHEATIN' HEART

"Jerry Harvey, a business professor, adopts an uncommon definition of cheating in his classes.

"'Cheating is the failure to assist others on an exam if they request it,' he tells his students. . . .

"Harvey says his policy brings out the best in his students because they are able to think creatively without the stress of working on their own . . . .

"Students think it is wrong to ask other students for help on tests and assignments because they are never presented with a different perspective on cheating, Harvey says."

—*from the* GW Hatchet *(March 2, 2000), the student newspaper of George Washington University*

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bourgeois family by being plunged for an hour or two into an ice-cold bath of philosophical erudition.

Nietzsche, with little doubt the most spontaneous of great modern philosophers, spent much of his life trying to combat the volcanic impetuosity of his intellectual "eruptions." And the conclusion he reached, beautifully expressed in the preface he wrote for *Morgenröte* ("Morning Glow" or "Daybreak," depending on whose translation one uses), was that *profound* thinking is above all *slow* thinking. He even suggested, in another of his books, that hasty and above all *strident* thinking was a sign of intellectual immaturity.

For an intellectual phenomenon like Bernard-Henri Lévy, whose thoughts are so rapid that they keep outstripping the words needed to express them, it will not be easy to reach this higher level of slow, profound thinking. It may prove impossible for a man of such an effervescent temperament. In this sense, one can say that it was inevitable that he should one day pay his personal tribute to the brilliant, tirelessly talkative, and incessantly writing "pope" of French existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, who to the end of his days remained an intellectual adolescent and *enfant terrible* (his description of himself in the autobiographical *Les Mots*), forever on the lookout for conventions to flay, stolid readers to shock, causes to espouse that were "heretical" to most *bien-pensant* members of his own middle class.

Years ago, in one of the most devastating essays written about Sartre ("The Void of Sartre," published in 1957 in the second number of *The Anchor Review*), the wise Swiss historian and critic Herbert Lüthy noted: "In essays or polemics a gifted dialectician like Sartre can go on defending a vicious circle for years without being budged from the convenient perimeter. He is far too busy proving his points to have time to think about them."

Is this perhaps why, toward the end of his life, Jean-Paul Sartre decided to abandon his all-too-fashionable expatiations and, in an extraordinary act of intellectual subordination, to adopt the more seriously and slowly elaborated philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas? Perhaps. But the price that France—more exactly two philosophically "lost generations"—had to pay for the privilege of being so brilliantly misled was assuredly a heavy one. With devastating consequences, particularly in the field of French education.

As Claude Imbert, the editor of the weekly *Le Point* (to which Bernard-Henri Lévy contributes a weekly commentary), observed, describing French intellectuals who go on believing that it is their sacred duty to indoctrinate the public:

> Blinded by the Idea and systems, they see nothing of the changing reality of the world. Our luminaries, as is well known, before the war betrayed their duty of fair examination in favor of a more or less extreme right wing, then, after the war, in favor of a more or less extreme left wing. In truth, extremism is their vade-mecum. Convinced, ever since the romantic age, that genius unfurls itself only in revolt, and human progress in the one and only Revolution, they practice an abasement of the Ego and the love of a certain idea of the People—in which the people no longer recognizes itself.
>
> Sartre, precociously blind, an aged Oedipus in a century of the Atrides, ends up extolling Mao and adoring Castro. He ends up, finally, falling back on the Bible, as one tumbles back into second childhood. What a life! A torch of liberty drowned in the great error of the century!

How many readers of Bernard-Henri Lévy's incredible apologia of this philosophical masochist will reach a similar conclusion is anybody's guess. Beguiled by BHL's superlatives, dazzled by the verbal panache, they may well feel flattered that France, during the recently ended century, was after all able to bring forth such a polymathic genius.

As I write these lines, a large crowd of howlers, many of them sporting "*Contre Haider*" badges (for spontaneous demonstrations of this kind need careful preparation), have gathered in the Abbey square of Saint-Germain-des-Près to denounce the governor of Austrian Carinthia, as though his jackbooted stormtroopers were about to cross the Danube and march on Munich. Claude Imbert, I feel sure, was not one of them. Nor, for that matter, was Bernard-Henri Lévy. Forever on the move, forever on the breach, he was once again "up front"—this time in Vienna. Accompanied, no doubt, by several of his *gauche caviar* friends, not all of whom, alas, are rich enough to own a palace in Marrakesh. And with them too was France's former Grand Master of Pop Culture and now chairman of the National Assembly's foreign-affairs committee, Jack Lang, who after briefly touching down at Huntsville, Alabama, to put in a plea for a condemned criminal and to deliver an anathema against the barbarism of capital punishment, managed to jet-race his way back to Vienna in time to take part in the anti-Haider jamboree. But what, after all, could be more natural, more predictable, more "inevitable"? For there is nothing that these restless egalitarians more enjoy doing than publicly showing off their moral as well as intellectual superiority.

Curtis Cate in the author of biographies of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, George Sand, and André Malraux.

Letter From Town Line

by Richard Davis

Copperhead Road

◆

I grew up in Alden, New York, a small town about 20 miles east of Buffalo. My parents still live there, and they (especially my mother) are very active in the town historical society and its museum.

In that museum is a worn old wooden desk, unremarkable except for the sign that explains that it was used, in late 1861, to count the votes (85 to 40) whereby Town Line seceded from the Union. (Town Line is a small, unincorporated collection of homes and stores at the crossroads of what is now U.S. 20 and Townline Road, which separates the towns of Alden and Lancaster. In 1861, it was a farming hamlet of around 300 people.)

The reasons for the secession are not clear. According to newspaper clippings from much later, the area was settled by Vermonters and Germans with no ties to the South. One house was an Underground Railway station, and there is mention of an undocumented legend of some violent act or acts by escaping slaves pass-

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ing through. There is also speculation about a desire to avoid the draft—highly unlikely, since late 1861 predates the draft by a couple of years.

Documentation of Town Line history is very limited—five men reportedly made their way south to fight for the Confederacy, and ten eventually fought for the Union. It also seems that many of the secessionists fled to Canada during the last two years of the war, as a result of increasing hostility in the area as casualty lists grew ever longer.

Even more remarkable than Town Line's secession is the fact that the same desk was used to count the votes to rejoin the Union—on January 24, 1946!

Apparently, no one ever thought to force Town Line back into the Union during those 84 years. This raises a number of interesting questions. During that time, were Town Line residents legally subject to federal income taxes? Were they legally subject to the military draft during the two world wars? Were residents legally eligible for Social Security or any of the other New Deal programs? Newspaper articles indicate that residents did pay taxes and vote—"mostly Republican"—all those years. Nevertheless, I've seen no reference to any Supreme Court rulings on secession. The Confederate states were conquered, occupied, and returned to the Union, but beyond this display of force, where are the legal issues of secession addressed? Since Town Line was not conquered or occupied, the legal status of its secession seems to be in limbo.

The sign on the desk doesn't explain *why* Town Line decided to rejoin the Union. Based on copies of newspaper clippings from 1945-46 that Mom kindly provided from the Alden Historical Society files, it appears that it was largely a publicity stunt. There was some publicity in mid-1945 when Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Dade County, Georgia, officially rejoined the Union, apparently the last official holdouts in the occupied South. This spurred memories in Town Line, and someone saw an opportunity to generate publicity. The result was worthy of today's political media circus—even Hollywood got involved.

First came a letter to President Truman, seeking advice on how to rejoin. Following his advice, in October 1945, Town Liners killed the fatted calf for a veal barbecue at which a small group voted to suspend the ordinance of secession until a full vote could be arranged. They then appealed to Gov. Thomas E. Dewey for protection until such a vote could be taken, promising to behave in the interim. (There is a mysterious reference in one of these newspaper articles to an earlier 23 to 1 vote *not* to rejoin, but no details are given as to how much earlier or who was voting and under what circumstances.)

The vote was scheduled for January 24, 1946. Meanwhile, the old school building (long since converted to a blacksmith shop) where the original secession vote was cast flew the Confederate battle flag. (It seems, again from the newspaper articles, that the town was unable to find anyone who could even give a description of the official Confederate colors—the "Stars and Bars.")

January 24 began with Hollywood propaganda, 1946-style. The world premier of *Colonel Effingham's Raid* was held—free of charge—in the Town Line fire hall for the residents, ostensibly to encourage them to "do the right thing" when they voted later. The premier was graced by the presence of the star, Cesar Romero, and his leading lady, Martha Stewart (an earlier celebrity by that name). This moment in the limelight had no lasting effect on Town Line, which has been ignored by Hollywood ever since. If it had any effect on the movie, it must have been to banish it to an obscurity which has kept it from even the early morning hours of the most esoteric old movie channels on cable.

The final vote was 90 to 23 in favor of annulling the order of secession, and the 23 "nay" votes were reportedly a further publicity gesture. The battle flag came down, the Stars and Stripes went up, the intersection was renamed "Truman Square," and in 1947 the blacksmith shop was demolished to allow for the widening of Townline Road. So ended—at last—the War Between the States.

It's hard to believe that Town Line's 1861 secession was unique in the North, though it is possible that this was indeed the case. The myth of national unity is a strong one, but the newspaper clippings indicate that all of Erie County (which includes Buffalo as well as Town Line) gave Abraham Lincoln only the slightest of majorities in 1860. Northern "Copperheads" (or "Peace Democrats") aren't completely forgotten—they did, after all, run George McClellan for president in 1864—but their story is very much deemphasized in a country where proponents of a New World Order assume great futures for a unified world, where Town Lines of any size, be they in Ireland, Yugoslavia, Turkey, the former Soviet Union, or scores of other places around the world, have little or no ability to determine their own futures. If once-Confederate Arkansas succeeds in imposing carpetbagger Hillary Clinton on now-occupied Town Line and the rest of New York, the South will, I suppose, in one way have come full circle, but it will be a pointless circle and a tragic blow to the kind of local independence that led the South—and Town Line—to try to go their own ways in 1861—and that led 13 British colonies to do so in 1776.

Richard Davis is a dentist from Hurlock, Maryland.

Letter From Venice

by Andrei Navrozov

The Leporello Aspect

◆

A couple of months ago, I was in Milan for an "Homage to Giorgio Strehler" at the Teatro alla Scala. This was Mozart's *Don Giovanni,* conducted by Riccardo Muti and with a cast that, at least to my unspoiled ears, represented the sort of perfection that one only reads about, ruefully, in yellowed reviews of the opera seasons one's parents attended. During the intermission, as I leafed through the souvenir program, I realized I had a modest contribution to make to the literary study of Da Ponte's libretto, and that is the observation that while the *cavaliere* speaks plainly, Leporello, his *servo,* slips into the more fanciful conditional or subjunctive mood every time he feels he has a captive audience. The overall effect is that of hilariously coquettish temporizing. At the start of the second act, as the nobleman loses patience with his servant, he turns choleric and shouts the buffoon down: "*Non soffro opposizioni!*"

Now back to Venice, where I had to sign the lease on the apartment I am renting. The owner is a young girl in her 20's, recently orphaned. ("No father, no mother," says Walter Matthau in Elaine May's *A New Leaf,* "no sisters, no brothers. She's perfect.") In everything that

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concerns the management of her vast estate she relies on the lawyer who used to be a close friend of her mother's, Avvocato I—, and it was to his office in S. Croce that I had been asked to come at ten o'clock that morning. The lease had long been agreed, drawn up, faxed back and forth between the contracting parties, and although all sorts of fast ones had been pulled in the process, I had decided not to quibble and just get the thing over with. I was there to sign.

The subjunctive mood of verbs, used to express condition, hypothesis, contingency, or possibility, does not exist in Russian grammar. Although the ghost of a subjunctive lingers on in English, Italian retains four whole tenses (plus a conditional). It is only when one finds oneself face to face with an Italian lawyer, intent on wasting his time at the expense of his client, a wealthy orphan, that one finally grasps the concept of language as a social instrument in all its ruthlessly grasping actuality. From 10 to 11:30, the Avvocato spoke to me in interminable sentences where no verb had a suffix I had ever heard before and exotic particles whizzed by me like ricocheting bullets, which was mighty strange, I kept saying to myself, since the document had already been signed by his client. So what earthly reason could there be for all those conditions, hypotheses, contingencies, and possibilities?

I managed to sign the thing just before noon, but the Avvocato would not let me go. Still in his jolliest subjunctive, he launched into a discussion of Italian inefficiency—"in government! *and* in finance!! and in *LAW*!!!"—which ended a full hour later with a perfectly simple statement, delivered by a pretty secretary using the indicative mood of the relevant verb, to the effect that he had a luncheon engagement in 15 minutes. We shook hands, and at quarter past one I finally crept away, thinking how marvelous it was that I wasn't the dumb sucker paying the bill. One hundred and ninety-five minutes to sign a piece of paper! If it hadn't been for that luncheon entr'acte, I'm sure I would have had to hear a sermon on the general imperfection of man, perhaps in both the Venetian and the Milanese versions, and if he ever got tired of the subjunctive he might have treated me to a recital of the No. 82 *vaporetto* timetable between Piazzale Roma and Ponte dell' Accademia. No, no, I know, this is the whole point. That simply isn't done.

Having had some experience of litigation and lawyers in both the United States and Britain, I can declare that, by those standards, the behavior of Avvocato I—, not by any means a fly-by-night operator or ambulance-chaser but a long-trusted family practitioner and pillar of the community, is shocking and absurd. Yet there are no lawyer jokes in Italy. Italians prefer to tell jokes about politicians and policemen, and I have an amusing little statistic here that helps to explain why. According to *Corriere della Sera*, the total number of *Tangentopoli* indictments, that is, indictments ordered by prosecutors in the eight-year history of the "Clean Hands" corruption investigations in Italy, stands at 3,146. The number of indictments actually granted by the courts is 1,233. The number of actual convictions is 582. The number of people actually serving prison sentences is four.

The reason why there are no lawyer jokes in Italy is that lawyers—like doctors, pharmacists, architects, engineers, accountants, surveyors—are professionals, and hence invulnerably, unshakably, immovably middle class. Can anyone think of a single American joke at the expense of an architect? Of an English joke about an engineer? Neither obvious upstarts like the politicians nor poor deadbeats like the *carabinieri*, Italian professionals are all of them pillars of the community and models of responsible citizenship. They are more than bourgeois professionals; they are professional bourgeois. They may not be revered, or even deeply respected, but making jokes about them is too much like cutting off your nose to spite your face. Thus a lawyer may be cheating an orphan, a surveyor may be soliciting a bribe, an accountant may be arranging the payoff for a contract killing, but they are each other's and everybody else's own, they are the community's flesh and blood, they are what everyone wants to be and is. Except for the class distinction that is their affected speech—deracinated, phantasmagoric, mellifluous, soporific, interwoven with tidy contradistinctions and tiny possibilities.

Genteel syntax, of which the subjunctive mood of verbs is a serviceable gauge, is the sword and the shield of the professional, the stratification police of Italian middle-class diction, the invisible dragon waiting to leap from the mouth of every white-collar gallant from Lombardy to Sicily. I'm not envious of these people's command of Italian, I swear. Quite the contrary. English culture until the 19th century and Russian culture well into the 20th were aristocratic in both tone and origin, more open by far to the itinerant craftsman than to the rich academician. Logically, it is the indicative and, even more clearly, the imperative mood of verbs that takes pride of place in my system of cultural values, and this level of syntax, fortuitously, is much easier on the foreigner's tongue.

The diarist Woodrow Wyatt records that Kingsley Amis liked to tell the story of how he and Anthony Powell once went to tape a literary discussion at the BBC. The producer, a loquacious and eager young man, kept fiddling with the presentation, saying he would like the writers to speak more about this, highlight that, and so on. "We're not interested in the way you would like it," said Powell funereally in what, to my mind, is a perfect parody of genteel syntax in English. "We're only interested in the way we would like it."

The very term, "command of language," has something about it that is neither civilian nor very civil. "I would have liked to have done this for you, certainly," says the enlisted man to the commanding officer in a play about Italian life which somebody may one day write, "but unfortunately, due to circumstances which would not have been in my control even if the course of events had shown itself to be something other than it had, I was not able to be of much help in carrying out my ord—, I mean your instructions." This is more or less how the gallant professional uses his education to keep his dignity, by distancing himself from the thing which must be done in order not to become its doer, that is to say a mere servant or subject, and hence something other than perfectly genteel: "*Voglio far il gentiluomo, / e non voglio più servir*," as the lout Leporello sings in the opening scene of *Don Giovanni*, borrowing, like a nobleman's cloak, his master's indicative mood of the verb "to want."

"I want this." "Give me that." "Do it." This is how a child talks. Or a nobleman. Or a foreigner. I have never cracked an Italian grammar book, and now that my abysmal laziness has found for itself such profound rationale, somehow I doubt I ever will. Too much grammar is the only thing that's wrong with this country.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

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by Srdja Trifkovic

The Taiwanese Election: Implications for U.S. Security

The outcome of Taiwan's presidential election in March is potentially the most significant single event affecting American security since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Most analysts have failed to address the fundamental dilemma that Taiwan now presents for the defense strategy of the United States. The issue is fairly simple: Are our overseas commitments permanent and immutable, in which case the future of this country and the rest of the world is at the mercy of some distant land's electoral whims; or should those commitments be reexamined in the light of changing political circumstances abroad?

For over 50 years, Taiwan was ruled by the Chinese nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), which retreated there in 1949 after Chiang Kai-shek was defeated by Mao Tse-tung's Communists in the civil war. The KMT old guard regarded the island as an integral part of China, and for decades it clamped down on any display of Taiwanese particularism, let alone separatism.

By the early 1970's, the claim of "the Republic of China" to represent the only legitimate Chinese government was no longer taken seriously by the rest of the world, and most Taiwanese appeared more interested in economic prosperity than in forcing the issue of their island's ambiguous status. Until three months ago, however, Chiang's successors in Taipei could agree with Mao's successors in Peking on one critical issue: that reunification was desirable and inevitable. This accord provided the basis for an uneasy but manageable status quo.

For decades, the U.S. security guarantee to Taiwan was implicitly based on this key premise. But last March, the separatist Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), supported mostly by the native Taiwanese, won the presidential election (albeit with only 39.3 percent of the vote, due to an internal split within the KMT), and the equation is qualitatively different now. Although the new president, Chen Shui-bian, has toned down his pro-independence rhetoric, Peking is deeply and understandably unhappy with this outcome. From the mainland Chinese point of view, the KMT Chinese nationalists were schismatics—but the DPP separatists are heretics.

This outcome comes at a time when the Clinton administration's inconsistent policies toward both Taipei and Peking—and especially its decision to sell sophisticated weaponry to Taiwan—have effectively demolished the Chinese-American détente built by Nixon and Kissinger in the early 1970's. The incoherence of the Clinton/Gore team's China strategy emboldened the outgoing KMT government to risk confrontation with the mainland. In addition, it has encouraged Taiwanese separatists to conclude that they would remain under an American security umbrella even if their actions present an intolerable challenge to Peking.

America's allies in the region are very worried. Their fears were summarized by the *Korea Times* on March 20:

> Given, on the one hand, the entrenched American mindset and its pattern of behavior with an ever escalating air of invincibility and self-righteousness, and, China, on the other hand, with its increasing irritation and frustration over Taiwan, reinforced by its growing economic power and nationalistic redemption, a war between the two will not be avoidable.

Other Asian countries understand that, while the United States has no vital interest involved in Taiwan, Peking does. This is an issue over which China will fight: If it is seen to waver on Taiwan, its hold over Sinkiang, Tibet, or even Manchuria may become tenuous, and its status as a great power compromised.

China's determination is reflected in its pressure on its neighbors to scale down their relations with Taipei. Significantly, America's allies along the Pacific Rim have responded. Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines have all given discrete notification to Washington that their "mutual defense" treaties with the United States do not cover contingencies in the Taiwan Strait.

In the next stage, the Chinese may present the United States with a clear-cut question: Would you be prepared to go to war against us if we act to prevent Taiwan from proclaiming independence? If the United States does not ponder this question soon it will paint itself into a corner and reduce its options to the choice between a humiliating retreat or an unpredictable military escalation that could lead to nuclear war. If that happens, not a single country in East Asia will side with America. Tokyo would declare neutrality, irrevocably altering the regional balance. As the Korean editorialist concludes:

> [W]ithout good relations with China, the U.S. position will inevitably suffer a downward slide, and without resolving the thorny issue of Taiwan, there will never be good relations with Beijing. . . . Perhaps the U.S. leaders ought to re-read the golden advice of the Founding Fathers concerning the nation's conduct of foreign relations . . .

Indeed, permanent American security guarantees to distant countries are a bad idea in principle. The fact that we don't like the murderous commies who still run the show in Peking is simply irrelevant here: Risking an all-out war with the most populous country in the world—and a nuclear power capable of obliterating a few American cities—over the way one of its provinces is governed is plainly ludicrous. Persisting with the risk, even when the new rulers of that province want to turn it into a new country, is irresponsible and potentially disastrous.

The security of the United States must not be made dependent on the outcome of elections thousands of miles away. Only by disentangling itself from its many passionate attachments around the globe—from the Middle East to Korea, from the Balkans to the Baltics—will America regain its ability to define a strategic doctrine based on its genuine national interests. Then America may rediscover a foreign policy that balances rational objectives and the limited resources used in their pursuit. ☆

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

A Spy in the House of NATO

by Justin Raimondo

The recent news that there was a spy at NATO who revealed top-secret plans—including detailed descriptions of targets—during the Kosovo war has thrown the Pentagon and the Western powers into confusion and dismay. According to the London *Guardian* (March 10), a classified U.S. military intelligence report reveals that the Serbs may have been reading the NATO air command's daily orders before the NATO pilots did, starting from day one of the operation (March 24, 1999). The secret report was also discussed in a BBC documentary that aired March 12 with the Orwellian (or perhaps ironic) title, *A Moral War*.

According to the BBC reporters, the spy passed information to the Serbs about the activities of NATO spy planes and unmanned reconnaissance drones, so that Serb military units could move about undetected right before a scheduled bombing raid. The Pentagon also has concluded that the information was not hacked out of NATO's computer systems by Serb cyber-pirates. According to the *Guardian*, Gen. Wesley Clark "suspected early in the bombing campaign that Belgrade had a spy in [NATO's] Brussels headquarters." Clark has vigorously denied this. But the *Guardian* cites a "senior source" within NATO headquarters who quoted Clark as saying: "I know I've got a spy, I want to find him." Another source noted that pilots at NATO's Vincenze base in northern Italy were worried that the Serbs were "picking up on our runs."

There were certainly a lot of potential spies to choose from: The distribution list of the daily "air tasking orders" (ATOs) contained no less than 600 names. When the NATO-crats narrowed it down to 100, that apparently stopped the leak. Still, this alleged spy remains at large, his (or her) identity still unknown to NATO, nor is it known how this person transmitted the information to Belgrade.

The suspicion that NATO high command had a spy was initially reported last year, in the first week of the bombing campaign, when a U.S. F117A Stealth fighter was downed by Serb anti-aircraft missile fire. According to news reports and rumors coming from the Pentagon, the humiliating attack on the Stealth was successful because its secret flight plan had been obtained by Belgrade. Last August, a NATO official was cited as the source of a story claiming that an Allied military officer had passed the details of the bombing raids to a Russian intelligence operative, who then turned the information over to the Yugoslavs.

Rumor had it that the spy was a Frenchman. This was no doubt based on an admission by Pierre-Henri Bunel that he had given a Yugoslav diplomat access to NATO's bombing plans in October 1998, five months before the bombing began. Apparently, Bunel—who said he acted out of hatred for the U.S. government—was not alone, and the generally more pro-Serb French came under immediate suspicion.

The secret U.S. report, which was drawn up by retired Air Force Gen. James McCarthy for Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre and Gen. Joe Ralston, avers that the Serbs had foreknowledge of NATO bombing raids. The report notes that when the distribution list was reduced, "the effect was immediate," and the Serbs appeared to be in the dark. Before that, things had gotten so bad (as Gen. Clark admitted to Reuters after the *Guardian* article ran), that particularly sensitive information had to be entirely omitted from ATOs. Lt. Col. Vic Warzinsky likewise confessed to reporters that "there was a sense at NATO headquarters that the Serbs were pretty well informed about what we were doing." More importantly, he widened the list of possible suspects, stating that the Serbian David could have been aided in his fight against the U.S./NATO Goliath by any number of possible suspects. According to the *Guardian*, this included spotters placed at the head of NATO's Italian runways; on the other hand, diplomats assert that the information was readily available to an even larger audience once it reached the various European capitals.

The NATO-crats, while forced to admit the possibility of a spy, are doing their best to downplay the effect that this had on the conduct of the war—and the ramifications for future military action in the Balkans. This supposedly "secret" U.S. report, originally leaked to the BBC, goes to great lengths to imply that the security breach was plugged when the distribution list was shortened. BBC military correspondent Andrew Gilligan reports that the mole remains a mystery, but that "heavy hints are being dropped that it was not a leak from NATO headquarters itself, but from one of the national delegations attached to it or from a national government."

Virtually every news report on the "spy in the house of NATO" contains this allegation by U.S. government officials, which is one good reason to treat it with suspicion. If this is an attempt to steer us away from the truth about a highly placed spy near the top of the NATO command structure, it fits with another twist to this case, provided by the German left-wing newspaper *Tageszeitung*.

In an article published March 10, the newspaper claims that the NATO mole who tipped off Belgrade is a U.S. Air Force officer. This officer contacted the newspaper and authorized it to reveal his nationality after the war ended, under the condition of strict anonymity. It was this American officer who betrayed NATO's ATOs to the Serbs: That downed Stealth fighter fell victim to the dictates of his (or her) conscience.

If this story is true, there can be little doubt that the NATO mole acted because of a conscious moral decision, rather than the more traditional inducements of 30 pieces of silver or a desire to be on the winning side. According to *Tageszeitung*, the officer said he turned over NATO's secrets on the grounds that the attack on Yugoslavia was illegal by the precepts of international law and immoral because of the "blackmail ultimatum" delivered at Rambouillet. While our rulers rampage from one end of the world to the other, this person clearly feels that Americans have a moral obligation to engage in civil disobedience, disruption, and outright sedition, through any and all avenues open to them.

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Some would argue that the spy in the house of NATO is a hero, while others would liken him to Benedict Arnold. Rather than take a side in that dispute, I'd prefer to examine why a high-ranking American officer has been put in the position where he must choose between his country and his conscience.

Clearly, in his own mind, the American spy is betraying a foreign acronym, and not the United States. And this is a legitimate point: NATO and the United States are *not* the same entity, and, as the European Union develops its own military force, it is rapidly becoming clear where their interests diverge. It is also easy to imagine how the spy rationalized, at least to his own satisfaction, the risk that his actions would lead to American casualties. To a conscience sufficiently outraged and abused, any casualties that result from his actions could be justified on the grounds that the pilots were engaged in criminal acts, as opposed to legitimate combat, not only because they were bombing civilian targets, but also because of the war's essential illegality.

Yet there is such a thing as taking a moral cause too far, and declaring war on your own country fits into this category. This regrettable incident underscores one of the worst dangers of our globalist foreign policy. When patriots are so alienated from their own governments that treason seems the right thing to do, then the ruling elite in this country is in for some real trouble.

If and when the spy in the house of NATO is caught, his trial should be quite interesting—should NATO dare to hold one. The whole policy that led to a criminal war will also be put in the dock, and that is not something the War Party looks forward to. The truth about the Kosovo war is finally coming out—that the NATO-crats lied about Racak, the precipitating incident of the war; that they lied about the alleged Serb "massacre" of Albanians in a reenactment of the holocaust; that they misrepresented the KLA as heroic democrats, when in fact they are murderous drug-dealers who make the Crips and the Bloods look like the Boy Scouts. In this context, the widespread dissatisfaction in the U.S. military with our global interventionism may become quite a problem, and could even put a crimp in our leaders' plans for the Balkans. The prospect of an increasingly rebellious element within the U.S. military, which denies the moral and political legitimacy of America's imperial foreign policy, is the War Party's worst nightmare. What should frighten our rulers out of any further intervention in the region is the ominous possibility that this case of the spy wrestling with his conscience may be only the beginning.

Justin Raimondo writes from San Francisco.

EDUCATION

Adam Smith University: A Modest Proposal

by Richard D. Lamm

Fellow investors: Here is our business plan. The route to big profits is to find an industry that is oversized, inefficient, smug, and self-satisfied and then give it an injection of good old-fashioned business competition. Bring the power of business thinking and private sector efficiency to an outmoded industry. Cut costs and prices, downsize, consolidate, merge. Take advantage of new technologies and new markets. This is how entrepreneurs have taken over numerous other industries, and it is our road map to take over higher education and make big profits.

Privatizing and re-engineering higher education is an idea whose time has come. Most colleges and universities have outpriced themselves in the market and do not realize they are vulnerable. They think because they have existed for a thousand years that they can continue another thousand. Like hundreds of hospitals that close every year, they think that, because they mean well, they will do well.

Yet there is evidence already that they are not doing well. For example, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recently stated flatly that "universities don't deliver on what they advertise." Many students graduate, they find, "without knowing how to think logically, write clearly or speak coherently." They find many teaching assistants teaching lecture classes who can't speak understandable English, and describe some university professors as "tenured drones who deliver set lectures from yellowed notes, making no effort to engage the bored minds of the students in front of them." They go on: "Baccalaureate students are the second class citizens who are allowed to pay taxes but are barred from voting; the guests at a banquet who pay their share but are given leftovers." This describes an industry ripe for takeover.

We specialize in taking over industries that look in rearview mirrors. That this industry is part private nonprofit and part public frightens some investors. Investors tend to overlook the potential in privatizing government and nonprofit functions. Privatization is on the march; it allows us to do much more for less money and with less bureaucracy. Our management team already has experience in privatizing K-12 schools, welfare, and prisons. Remember that Ross Perot became one of America's richest men by privatizing governmental functions.

In our research department's opinion, higher education is ready for a takeover by the private sector. Here is a plum just waiting to be picked. It is an investor's dream. Where else can you find an industry that offers about half its customers discounts paid for by the other half; with vast unnecessary overhead expenses that can be slashed drastically; whose key employees often work less than 20 hours a week, resist examination of their productivity, and can't be fired or forced to retire (yet aren't unionized); and whose CEO has little power and authority. Add to this the fact that the market is overbuilt, even for the current customer base, and that the customer base is declining.

Peter Drucker, who has seen the future so clearly, recently predicted the end of universities as we know them. "Such totally uncontrollable expenditures, without any visible improvement in either the content or quality of education means that the system is rapidly becoming untenable," he said, ". . . already we are beginning to deliver more lectures and classes off campus via satellite or two-way video at a fraction of the cost." Those gloomy words are our route to big profits.

Colleges and universities have too many courses taught by overpaid professors, in an old-fashioned person-to-person way, to students who are becoming more price competitive. Phoenix University is able to hold its salaries and benefits cost per credit hour delivered to approximately 25 percent of normal university costs, and so can we. And we don't intend to

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stop there. Why should a college be able to "tax" paying students to subsidize nonpaying students? Like cost-shifting in health care, we need to stop including social goals in the price of our products.

Remember, this industry is *nonprofit*. It has never felt the sting of real competition and has grown bloated, inefficient, bureaucratic, and oblivious. It is amazingly out of touch with current business practices and does not recognize how vulnerable it is. Its vision is of the past, not the future. It stubbornly adheres to a tradition and model that is over 1,000 years old. It is a high-cost anachronism that is imposing staggering economic demands on middle-income parents.

The key concepts in business today are almost completely unknown on campus. Yet the ability to consolidate, merge, downsize, and outsource is as great in higher education as it is in other places where we have made large profits, such as banks, radio stations, television stations, and health care. We earn profits by rationalizing an irrational market.

We seek to reconceptualize higher education. It is our intention to do to higher education what Charles Schwab did to the securities industry and Sheraton did to hotels. We will gain control of some key institutions nationwide, fire most of the employees, and replace them with lower paid but equally competent workers. We will then hire some of the best-known academics and have them telecommuting and/or teleconferencing to all our subsidiaries at the same hour on the same day. We feel that the information revolution has created a massive oversupply of professors. The Internet and telecommuting and/or teleconferencing can replace most of the teaching functions of colleges or universities. Students in much more comfortable classrooms will watch the world's best professors on a giant screen. We will sell ads to be run before and after the lectures, and we have Seinfeld already under contract to promote our common curriculum. We will hire proctors to replace professors and cut out many unnecessary and superfluous functions. We will stop taxing half the students via higher tuition to support all or part of the other half of the students. We will run education like a business. If government wants to subsidize poor students, let it do so directly instead of by cost shifting.

We figure that, with the Internet, we can cut the cost of libraries in half and save bundles just by discontinuing a bunch of journals that nobody reads anyway. We will stock the library with only the best books on every subject, which we estimate can cut our library acquisition costs in half.

We also have under contract some of the key entrepreneurs who took over and consolidated the mortuary business, builder's supplies, barber shops, etc. They realize the power and efficiency of mass purchasing and common management. We estimate that we can cut the cost of tuition in half and still make gargantuan profits. In many areas we can buy three institutions and merge or close one (the business plan of Columbia HCA). We can discontinue discounts (called scholarships) and undercut the existing system. We feel that the political climate is ripe to privatize those institutions now under both private and public control.

We feel that we can produce as good or better products—called graduates—as the current system does for a fraction of the cost. After all, whoever has custody and jurisdiction over young people as they age from 18 to 22 is bound to see massive improvement in those customers. We have human maturity working for us, for which we can take partial or even full credit.

Our research department hasn't been this excited about an industry since computers. Market-driven higher education can yield a good, standard quality product for a fraction of the present price. For a prospectus, call . . . .

Richard D. Lamm is a former governor of Colorado.

POLITICS

The Sin of Adam's Mark

by Philip Jenkins

Most academics belong to at least one of the various professional societies which can be of decisive importance in shaping careers. These societies award prestigious prizes and grants, and some, like the Modern Languages Association and the American Sociological Association, achieve their greatest significance during annual conferences that are, in effect, the national conventions of particular branches of scholarship. With this in mind, it is easy to understand the shock scholars felt this past February when they received an e-mail warning that the Organization of American Historians (OAH), one of the two largest associations in the historical field, was threatening (on very short notice) to cancel its annual meeting for 2000 and to pay financial penalties which would have destroyed the organization altogether. Though the OAH managed to avoid committing total *hara-kiri*, the whole affair offers striking testimony to the current state of the academic profession, and to its ideological coloring: We find here yet more proof that a sizable number of college professors are still mired in a 1960's dreamworld.

The crisis began with a legal dispute concerning the 21-hotel Adam's Mark chain, which allegedly practiced systematic discrimination against black guests. Reportedly, Adam's Mark hotels repeatedly gave blacks inferior rooms at higher rates and even forced black guests to wear identifying armbands to prove their right to be on the premises. These practices came to light during a major event called the Black College Reunion, held in Daytona Beach, Florida. Late last year, in response to complaints from the NAACP, the Justice Department began a formal lawsuit against Adam's Mark, which was denounced in harsh public statements by Janet Reno and Bill Lann Lee. Now a moral leper, Adam's Mark hotels found themselves boycotted by various liberal organizations, which suddenly canceled plans for meetings or conventions. The Episcopal Church announced one boycott, followed shortly by a gay and lesbian group, the Human Rights Campaign Fund.

Meanwhile, the OAH found itself in crisis because its annual beanfeast was scheduled to be held in an Adam's Mark hotel in St. Louis in April 2000, and the governing board was besieged by members demanding either cancellation or a shift of premises. At this late notice, the hotel would be entitled to substantial penalties: The OAH would have to pay the hotel $425,000, while the organization would forfeit another $200,000 in registrations and exhibitor fees. Basically, the organization would lose about half its annual budget, while Adam's Mark would come out far ahead financially, as it would have no problem reselling the

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rooms previously allotted to conference-goers.

Nevertheless, OAH members continued to demand withdrawal:

> By e-mail and fax, they have argued that to meet in the Adam's Mark is to compromise with racists. In order to take a bold stand against injustice, they have said that the organization must cancel the contract even though it would suffer serious financial consequences.

After some fevered days of debate and agonizing, the OAH executive came up with a solution a little this side of Armageddon: The conference would proceed, although the organization would "move registration, sessions, and other events out of the convention hotel as alternative venues in St. Louis are located." The organization would still owe Adam's Mark major compensation, but not the full cancellation penalty. In addition, the OAH would devote an unprecedented number of panels and sessions to issues of race and discrimination, and would support anti-discrimination demonstrations during the conference. This compromise was announced in a smug press release which boasted how historians were once again contributing to destroying racism, that "scourge on the land."

If the charges against Adam's Mark are true, then the practices described are indefensible morally, legally, politically, and economically: They are obnoxious, reprehensible, and socially destructive, and personally, I would have no wish to patronize a business of this kind. Boycotts do have their place, and can be enormously powerful instruments of social change. But in all the crusading furor, other important principles are being ignored, particularly the issue of proof. All the allegations have been presented in the course of civil litigation, and historians, who ought to know how to read documents critically, should know better than to take *parti pris* documents as objective fact. There is another side to the story, and Adam's Mark strenuously and specifically denies all the charges.

Rebutting the discrimination lawsuit, the chain counters that some of the specific problems raised by black guests resulted from the overwhelming pressure of numbers during a very well-attended Reunion, while other allegations are simply false. Corporate statements are supported by some African-American leaders, who have nothing but praise for the way in which the chain has, in bygone years, sponsored and hosted events like the Black College Reunion. Further contradicting the image of Adam's Mark as some kind of Klan subsidiary, the firm has a solid record of donations to black causes and charities.

I don't know exactly what happened at the Reunion in question, but I believe there is enough doubt about the case to forestall any rush to judgment. My doubts grew when I observed how the Adam's Mark case blew up in the first place. NAACP charges against the chain were leapt on by a Justice Department which, over the last eight years, has an abominable track record of using litigation threats in order to intimidate and shake down businesses and public institutions. In education, for instance—which should be a concern of professional historians—the Justice Department recently warned colleges that using standardized tests of any kind to determine admissions was probably an *ipso facto* violation civil rights law. Under demagogues like Bill Lann Lee, the Clinton Justice Department has committed itself to the most rigid and unreasonable interpretations of affirmative action, and the fact that this thoroughly partisan body is investigating or suing a particular corporation tells us precisely nothing about the truth of the charges. We might recall the complaint by the Victorian Lord Salisbury about the self-serving nature of official statements: "If you believe the doctors, nothing is wholesome. If you believe the theologians, nothing is innocent. If you believe the soldiers, nothing is safe." And, he might have added, if you believe the Justice Department, everything in contemporary America is racist.

The nature of civil rights suits in recent years is well-enough known to make nonsense of the main OAH demand, namely, "securing agreement by the Adam's Mark to a consent decree which assures the adoption of antidiscrimination policies with federal oversight." A consent decree is basically an admission of guilt, a capitulation, so that neither side has to face a long and costly trial: It is a device singularly favored by federal litigators with a weak case, who hope they can browbeat their target into caving in to avoid huge legal bills. In other words, the OAH is demanding that Adam's Mark have the good grace to surrender forthwith, without waiting for the formality of a trial, or even an impartial investigation. It is a scene which is played out thousands of times daily in police precincts across the land: "Why not just plead guilty to manslaughter and get it over with?" "But I didn't do anything!" "Don't waste our time—confess to the lesser crime, or we'll take you to trial for murder." In the Adam's Mark affair, OAH declares that "the recalcitrance of the hotel has made it impossible for the OAH to conduct its international scholarly meeting there as planned" ("recalcitrance" in this instance meaning a refusal to concede everything in an expensive lawsuit). After all, the OAH had made its own extensive inquiries of objective sources, including "regional and national leaders of the NAACP, the Department of Justice, and civil rights attorneys." Well, that should cover all possible bases, right? I have no personal knowledge of whether the hotels discriminated, but unlike the wise leaders of the OAH (and the Episcopal Church, and other worthy bodies), I do not believe that every allegation in civil lawsuits should be believed without thought or question. Nor do I believe that, just because the U.S. government has begun litigation in a particular case, its claims must be accepted automatically. Just call me a bigot.

To understand the OAH's war against Adam's Mark, it also helps to know the historical profession's own curious record of defending moral and ideological purity. One reason why the St. Louis debacle threatened to be so devastating was that historians were painfully aware of the results of the last explosion of moral outrage, when the American Historical Association canceled its 1995 meetings in Cincinnati following that city's passage of what was cast as an anti-gay ordinance: The AHA is still picking up the pieces, in terms of financial damage and personal rancor. For a large section of the profession, as for many of their counterparts in the humanities, the issues and tactics of the New Left years are still very much alive, and it is a constant source of regret for radical professors that they missed the golden age of protest in 1968. Lacking an authentic mass movement like those protesting segregation or the Vietnam war, they have no alternative but to pounce on anything which offers a reasonable facsimile. Standing alongside the whole graying generation which is spiritually stuck in fighting the Nixon administration, we find the younger folk in their 30's and 40's, for whom successive

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boycotts and demonstrations are best seen as a kind of passionate historical reenactment, rather like those weekend warriors who are constantly dressing up to refight the Civil War.

Once you do go looking for a target for activism, it is only too easy to find one: It is all but impossible to name a corporation or institution, a city or region, which cannot be blamed for something if someone decides to do so. Given the complex spider web of business relationships, virtually any hotel or resort, any restaurant chain, is likely to have a link to another firm which carries some political stigma, which can be claimed to have violated gay rights or women's rights, trodden on the wrong toes over abortion or pornography, been too enthusiastically pro- or anti-Israel, or—an up-and-coming favorite in the protest stakes—which operates "sweatshops" in low-wage countries. And any corporation which invests outside the continental United States risks charges that it is supporting tyrannical regimes and acquiescing to human rights violations. There is no need to suggest that a particular company which attracts public obloquy is any more guilty of these kinds of abuse than any other: The corporate target *du jour* usually happens to be the latest one identified in media reports, or at odds with some bureaucratic agency. It is rather like the calls we hear occasionally for U.S. military intervention around the globe: The situation involved is rarely the most destructive to human life or threatening to international security, but rather that which CNN has nominated as its latest obsession, the place where Christiane Amanpour is currently donning her designer flak jacket. If you are determined to go through life having nothing to do with any institution or corporation which is somehow tainted by some controversial association, the only real solution is to find a well-watered hillside somewhere and live as a hermit. If you want to attend a convention in a major city while avoiding tainted hotel chains or restaurants, then sleep in the streets and enjoy whatever goodies you can find in the dumpsters.

For all its grim financial consequences, the OAH's action over Adam's Mark proved immensely rewarding to many within that organization. It permitted activists a great deal of emotional satisfaction and gave them the opportunity to indulge a little old-fashioned rhetoric, even to pretend that the good guys were still facing down Bull Connor in the Alabama of the early 1960's. A little playacting is always enjoyable, though there can also be costs. Venting so much outrage on something so ambiguous as the Adam's Mark case discredits campaigns on more serious issues, while the incredibly self-destructive nature of recent boycotts tends to drive away moderate members who resent the waste of their membership dues. In the process, the OAH is reduced to an assembly of true believers, a New Left Re-Enactors' Guild. This is a shame since, as I've remarked, there are occasions when boycotts and principled resignations are justified and necessary. Me, I'm starting by resigning my membership in the OAH.

Philip Jenkins is Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University.

FILM

A Waste of Space

by George McCartney

Mission to Mars

Produced by Walt Disney Productions
Directed by Brian De Palma
Screenplay by Lowell Cannon, Jim Thomas, and Graham Yost
Released by Buena Vista Pictures

Instead of insulting our intelligence, as so much third-rate science fiction does, director Brian De Palma's second-rate *Mission to Mars* is just good enough to do something much worse: It insults our hope in a purposeful universe. It does so by invoking the now standard-issue movie metaphysics in which traditional theology is replaced with extraterrestrial teleology. Whether De Palma's reliance on this arthritic commonplace indicates a failure of imagination or a commercially minded cynicism is a delicate question. A glance at his career to date, however, may suggest an answer.

From his earliest efforts, De Palma has been the perfect film student. Glib and overtrained, he's always been eager to borrow from his idols, Alfred Hitchcock, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Howard Hawks. *Sisters* was his *Rear Window*; *Obsession*, his *Vertigo*; *Blowout*, his *Blowup*. Then, of course, there's *Scarface*, his lurid and ludicrous remake of Hawks' *Scarface*. In each, you can see him appropriating the camera moves, compositions, and pacing of his masters. But he does so like a talented child copying his favorite cartoon characters. The resulting images may formally resemble the originals, but they have none of their subtlety and little of their energy. Everything is laboriously overdone and consequently heavy, even oppressive.

That is why his films generally feel empty and unengaging. This is a shame because he can be a very good director when he stops being a chameleon of pure style and comes out on his own. He proved this with his hugely enjoyable and often trenchant 1987 film, *The Untouchables*. But even with a tough, driving script and strong actors, he couldn't resist some flashy filching. The film almost founders on one overwrought scene designed as a smirking homage to Sergei Eisenstein. In it, De Palma reworks *Potemkin*'s famous Odessa steps heart-stopper with his own toddler in a carriage careering down the stone steps of a train station while Eliot Ness's feds shoot it out with Al Capone's mob. This spectacular but enormously self-indulgent set piece is not storytelling; it's just vulgar preening.

This is De Palma's signature failing. For him, filmmaking is almost always about previous filmmaking. It's preeminently an exercise in form over substance. Worse, operating in a postmodernist mode, he feels compelled to prove he's cooler than his subject matter. Irony must always trump mere meaning.

Given this background, I'm persuaded that the trouble with *Mission to Mars* is the unacknowledged mockery at its frigid heart. This time, De Palma has stolen from another master. He's broken into Stanley Kubrick's one indisputable masterwork, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, released in 1968, and ransacked it thoroughly. Like most thieves, however, he has little respect for his loot. He only values it for what it can do for him.

Like *2001*, *Mission* focuses on astronauts who stumble upon the remains of a mysterious alien force. Instead of Kubrick's black and seamless monoliths, De Palma has given his aliens a human face in the form of a huge, somewhat Egyptian sculpture, its elegant nose rising a couple of stories above the peak of a Martian mountain. When approached

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by the first astronauts to land on the red planet, this mountain turns into a whirlwind of sand. It twists and turns until it resembles nothing so much as the wrong end of a Hoover that then quickly sucks three of the astronauts into its vacuum, pulling their bodies limb from limb. Luke Graham (Don Cheadle in a lucklessly desperate role) alone survives to send an SOS home to his space-station buddies.

As a rescue mission is quickly assembled, the script takes pains to have us empathize with its crew. We learn the journey will be hazardous. The mission controller (an avuncular and ponderous Armin Mueller-Stahl) wants to wait for a more propitious planetary alignment, noting that haste is not essential since they have no way of knowing whether or not Luke is still alive and it will take more than a year to get there, anyway. But spaceman Woody Blake (an insufferably earnest Tim Robbins) insists they blast off immediately. (Didn't he learn anything from his look-alike Tom Hanks in *Apollo 13*?) What's more, he demands that Jim McConnell (Gary Sinise) be given "right seat forward" as his navigator. Again, the mission controller demurs. Jim is not ready, he points out reasonably enough. Although he had been in line for the original mission, his wife died of some unnamed ailment, and he went into a protracted period of mourning that prevented him from completing his training. At this Woody explodes, "What was his crime? That he showed a little emotion?" When it comes to Mars, he goes on indignantly, Jim "wrote the book." The clincher comes when Jim stoutly speaks for himself. "I know the protocols for the Mars recovery ship better than anyone else because I designed them." If it's sympathy De Palma wanted for his characters, he's certainly earned it. You can't help feeling sorry for guys who have to deliver lines like these.

As in *2001*, there is plenty of disorienting gravity-free activity shipboard, as the second team soars into inky space. De Palma's camera does 360's, following the astronauts walking weightlessly about their ship's interior. Woody even dances with his wife, Terry (Connie Nielsen), who's on the mission also. (We're told earlier that research has proved spousal teams to be a stabilizing influence on such long-term journeys. Give De Palma a point for supporting monogamy, a rare enough quirk in Hollywood extravaganzas.) Although these scenes are done with great technical finesse, none of them surpasses what Kubrick accomplished 32 years ago. More tellingly, Kubrick's simulated space scenes served his theme. In their gravity-free environment, his astronauts were made to seem not only weightless but also strangely somnambulistic as though they had become mere automatons in the grip of a technology they no longer understood, much less controlled. In contrast, De Palma's space scenes only serve to display his filmmaking wizardry.

There's nothing inherently wrong with spectacle for spectacle's sake. When the film turns mystical, however, it becomes unforgivably offensive. This happens shortly after the rescue team lands and learns how to "talk" reassuringly to the crabby Martian monument. In no time at all, a crevice opens in its looming brow, emitting a blinding light from its interior. Despite their predecessors' rude welcoming, the rescue team hurries off to see what's inside. "Are you sure you want to do this?" Terry asks Luke gently. His answer is predictable: "I'm not sure about anything anymore. But I didn't come a hundred million miles to turn around at the last ten feet."

Inside the face, they find themselves in a near duplicate of the uncanny room that appears at the end of *2001*. It glows with light from every side, including floor and ceiling, and echoes with eerie squeaks and scrapes as if the astronauts were walking on glass. Suddenly, a holographic image of a Martian woman appears, done up in an Egyptian coiffure. With the aid of other holographs, she silently explains the tragic fate that befell Mars eons ago, a single computer-generated tear running down her phantasmal cheek to make sure we don't miss the poignancy of the moment. It seems some natural disaster had convinced the Martians to decamp to other galaxies posthaste. Before they left, however, they had just enough time to plant the seeds of life on a barren Earth. A display of the Martian role in instigating earthly evolution follows, provoking Luke to gasp in reverent awe: "My God! That's it! Hundreds of millions of years ago there was a sudden explosion of life on Earth and no one's ever understood how or why until now!" My God, indeed. In the beginning was Martian DNA, and the darkness grasped it not. Nor, for that matter, did I. What follows this revelation is even more perplexing: a glimpse of the eschatology the kindly Martians have prepared for their earthling offspring. It looks about as heavenly as a recycled Star Trek set.

Kubrick wisely left his aliens ambiguous. Their artifacts were harbingers of unplumbed mysteries. He meant his film to be a poetic meditation on our timeless longing for redemption and salvation. His protagonist's name, David Bowman, evokes this theme by echoing our formative religious and philosophical traditions, fusing the Hebraic David with the Hellenic Odysseus, known as the bowman for his triumphant archery in Homer's poem. Bowman's rendezvous with interstellar destiny suggests we may yet free ourselves from the soul-deadening materialism that currently threatens our humanity.

In contrast, De Palma is excessively literal regarding his aliens, and, I think, cynically manipulative. This I find personally offensive, for it insults my mother's faith. When I was 12, she told my sister and me of a theory she had formulated. Reasoning that God must have had a purpose when He created the planets, she wondered if He hadn't set them in orbit to provide us acreage on which to settle in our afterlives. Knowing that this wasn't quite orthodox, she advised us to keep her speculation indoors; there was no point in frightening the neighbors.

I remember being silently amused at the time. The enlightened education she was buying me had already begun to pay off in a precocious, not to say unwarranted, knowingness. Today, however, I'm chastened when I recall my youthful arrogance. I now know my mother's untutored speculations were much wiser than my shallow sophistication. As I was to discover later, she had devised her theory shortly after learning she was dying of leukemia. It was a time when the promise of salvation had understandably taken on more than usual urgency for her. Clearly, she wanted a concrete guarantee of its validity. When she looked up at the gleaming, orb-speckled night, she found it, not just for herself, but for her family and humanity at large. She faced death bravely because she was convinced it was only a passage to something more and, she hoped, better.

And why not? Why shouldn't we see in the majesty of the heavens the visible testimony of God's concern for us? What could be more logical, what more traditional? I'm quite sure my mother never read Dante, but I've no doubt she would have found his cosmic speculations quite congenial—at least those that didn't

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dwell on punishing the bejesus out of his enemies. Like most believing women of her time—perhaps any time—her regard for the doctrines of purgatory and hell wasn't robust.

Needless to say, De Palma is no Dante. He has served up yet another science fiction travesty of my mother's natural hope in supernatural answers. His mandate for doing so is all too evident. As I write, his film is number one at the box office. It's cashing in on our popular culture's sad but predictable hankering to fill the vacuum left by the widespread decline of traditional theology. De Palma's pseudoscientific hooey is resonating profitably with the same crowds who were spellbound by Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and Jodie Foster's *Contact*, films in which salvation arrives in spaceships and alien emanations. This is an audience largely made up of the sophisticates our universities annually turn loose on the body politic. Having had the idea of a personal God trained out of them, they can't help themselves. The prospect of benevolent aliens taking charge of human destiny turns them to dewy-eyed mush every time. To paraphrase G.K. Chesterton, the difficulty with losing faith is not that people will believe in nothing, but rather that they will believe in anything.

While such credulity in the masses is unfortunate, it's unspeakable in those people of talent and intelligence who would abuse it in the pursuit of fame and riches.

George McCartney teaches English at St. John's University.

RELIGION

The Growing Irrelevance of the NCC

by Mark Tooley

The National Council of Churches (NCC) is the Hugh Hefner of the religious world: aging and not dealing well with it, trapped in the fashions of the 1960's and 1970's, financially troubled, still offensive but no longer shocking, blissfully unaware of obsolescence, and feebly trying to disco at a time when retirement might be in order.

Of course, Hefner's *Playboy* still has three million readers, and his financial empire is still solvent, if stagnant. In contrast, the NCC is nearly bankrupt fiscally and, according to its conservative critics, spiritually bankrupt as well.

All of this was evident when the NCC recently celebrated its 50th anniversary in Cleveland. Many thousands of people braved a snowstorm to attend the NCC's founding there in 1950. Not even a thousand bothered to celebrate its anniversary, despite the balmy weather.

Established as an outgrowth of America's postwar optimism, the NCC once embodied the liberal mainstream. Anti-communist, pro-New Deal, anti-segregation, and pro-union, the new church council sought to unify America's denominations behind ecumenism and social justice. The nation's most prestigious Protestant churches were its founders, the Eastern Orthodox joined in order not to be left behind, and the NCC hoped the Roman Catholic Church would soon follow. Conservative evangelicals were seen as too irrelevant to consider.

Five decades later, Roman Catholics still see no need to join. Mainline Protestant churches are now entering their fourth consecutive decade of membership decline. And evangelical churches are thriving, with the conservative Southern Baptist Convention (never an NCC member) having long since surpassed the liberal-dominated United Methodist Church as America's largest Protestant communion.

Fewer than one in three American church members now belong to an NCC denomination. But with 35 denominations and 55 million church members still in the NCC, the gray old lady ought to wield a heavy stick. Instead, the NCC is unpopular with most of its own constituency. Its image never fully recovered from the *Sixty Minutes* and *Reader's Digest* stories of the early 1980's that exposed the NCC's close ties to Marxist movements.

Federal dollars (mostly for refugee resettlement) now exceed denominational gifts as a source of NCC income. To make up its huge deficit, the NCC sent an appeal for help in September to its traditional pillars: the United Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, American Baptist, Disciples of Christ, and United Church of Christ denominations. These "seven sisters" account for 90 percent of the NCC's denominational funding.

Instead of a bailout, the United Methodist Church responded by withholding over $300,000 in payments, demanding fiscal reforms in exchange for renewed funding. *The Christian Century*, the flagship publication of liberal Protestantism, published a cover story urging the "orderly, intentional dissolution of the NCC." The author was the Reformed Church in America's general secretary, who is also an NCC board member.

By raiding the coffers of its international relief agency, Church World Service, the NCC is striving to make up its deficit. The NCC has also enlisted a new leadership team. Former Pennsylvania congressman Bob Edgar is its new general secretary, while former Atlanta mayor and United Nations ambassador Andrew Young is its president. Both are reputed to be good fundraisers.

Both are also liberal Democratic politicians who share the NCC's view that genuine Christian faith is inextricably tied with left-wing politics. The collapse of Marxist "liberation" movements around the world left the NCC and its sister group, the World Council of Churches, somewhat perplexed about their future direction. In the years since, the NCC has tried to tame its political radicalism somewhat, aligning itself closely with the pragmatic Clinton administration. (After the Republican victory in 1994, an NCC delegation visited the Oval Office and prayed against the "unholy" legislation of the GOP Congress.)

That does not mean the NCC is making any apologies for its controversial Cold War role. For years it praised communist regimes in Cuba, Nicaragua, Angola, and China, while condemning U.S. military actions in Grenada, Libya, Panama, and Iraq. In Cleveland, the head of the World Council of Churches, Konrad Raiser, congratulated his NCC colleagues for their "prophetic cultural witness" during the Cold War, when they "built bridges to Eastern Europe and challenged McCarthyism." Raiser especially thanked the NCC for "exposing the complicity of the United States Government in dictatorship and repression" around the world, for "mobilizing against the Contras" in Nicaragua, fighting sanctions against Cuba, advocating Korean

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reunification, and resisting the "arms race" (i.e., U.S. military readiness).

A film to commemorate the NCC's 50 years claimed that the NCC's "dialogue" with the Russian Orthodox Church had precipitated the fall of the Berlin Wall. The accusations of collaboration with communist regimes were dismissed scornfully. As vindication, the film included a clip from a recent Charlie Rose interview with *Sixty Minutes* producer Don Hewitt. Hewitt laughingly recalled that he had been proud of his 1983 exposé of the NCC's Marxist ties until he started receiving congratulatory letters from "every redneck bishop" in America. (How many redneck bishops are there?)

Leftist groups such as the NCC miss the Cold War struggles almost as much as right-wingers, neither side having found an equally energizing replacement crusade. For the NCC, environmentalism is the most promising vehicle for promoting a newly repackaged global socialism. Jay Lintner of the NCC's Washington office cited the need for an "international environmental authority" to enact "global regulation of the environment." Lintner also listed universal health care, gun control, and campaign finance reform as key issues for the NCC.

But none of these is likely to re-ignite the NCC's activist flames or refill its depleted coffers. The NCC's non-relief spending last year totaled about $16 million, which supported 122 employees in New York. The anniversary event added another $150,000 to the almost four million dollar deficit; to erase it, the NCC wants an additional two million dollars from its member churches and $1.45 million from its relief agency, the more popular and better funded Church World Service. As many as 34 positions at the NCC might be eliminated.

Outgoing NCC General Secretary Joan Brown Campbell tried to justify her deficit spending, arguing that the NCC's heart is "too empathetic" not to be in debt:

> You are right that I value courage and imagination more than caution and efficiency . . . Our deficit is not in dollars but in our failure to see in one another the moral force that ends poverty as we know it and that challenges racism.

Challenging racism was to have been the NCC's chief post-Cold War crusade. An NCC initiative in 1995 to compel the United Nations to investigate "human rights" abuses in the United States based on racism flopped when only China and Sudan gave their support. Far more successful was the NCC campaign that claimed an epidemic of racist-inspired arsons of black churches.

There was never any firm evidence that black churches were more vulnerable to arson than other churches, and we now know that only a small number of fires at black churches were the work of white supremacists. But burning churches seduced the nation's imagination during the 1996 presidential election year, and the NCC raised over $9.1 million in cash for its Burned Churches Fund. Of that amount, the NCC spent only $6.4 million on actual church reconstruction, with the rest going to overhead and programs aimed at the "root causes" of racism.

In Cleveland, the NCC's fiery rhetoric about racism sometimes implied that America in the 1990's is little different from America in the 1890's. Recollections of the NCC's role in the civil-rights movement provided the rare moments of genuine celebration there. At a special NCC service in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Jesse Jackson made a surprise appearance. "We are winners," he cried as he recalled earlier civil-rights rallies in Cleveland. Fresh from a vigil at Decatur, Illinois, Jackson likened that school board's expulsion of seven brawling high-school students to lynching.

Enlivened by Jackson's oratory, a cavalcade of colorfully festooned clergy marched out of the cathedral singing "We're marching in the light of God." They processed to a banquet at the nearby Renaissance Hotel, where an encouraging message from Dwayne Andreas of Archer Daniels Midland awaited them. He is contributing $100,000 to the NCC. Applause, followed by a few amens. The money would at least help pay for the dinner.

As I write, the Presbyterian and Evangelical Lutheran churches are considering helping with the bailout, while the Methodists have reluctantly renewed their funding. Bob Edgar, the NCC's new general secretary, had called the Methodist cutoff a "sledgehammer." He is a former United Methodist minister who, after 12 years in Congress, led a Methodist seminary out of difficult financial straits. Calling himself a "salvager," he hopes the NCC will develop closer ties with Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, and evangelicals. Andrew Young also hopes to win the Church of God in Christ, a black Pentecostal denomination with over five million members, as the NCC's next member.

Both seem unlikely. Edgar and Young offered words of support at a breakfast for the Interfaith Assembly of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Caucuses and Affirming Organizations. The caucuses have been demanding that the NCC accept the predominantly homosexual Metropolitan Community Fellowship of Churches. That acceptance would precipitate a walkout by the Eastern Orthodox communions and possibly others. But there is no doubt with whom the NCC's staff sides. Many wore rainbow buttons of solidarity, and the NCC already protects "sexual orientation" in its hiring practices and offers domestic partner benefits for its employees.

Besides a multitude of other controversies—fiscal, political, and theological—the issue of homosexuality is probably sufficient to keep evangelicals, Catholics, and Pentecostals from joining. In an NCC panel discussion with representatives of these groups, the president of the National Association of Evangelicals was nearly alone in spelling out the problem. "We can't have unity at all costs," said the NAE's Kevin Mannoia. "We can't have a theology of the lowest common denominator. It leads to relativistic mush. There are absolutes."

"We're like an aging city with a crumbling infrastructure," Joan Brown Campbell admitted in her farewell remarks in Cleveland. "The infrastructure is sadly in need of repair, and it is not cheap to repair it." When mainline churches catch a cold, the NCC gets pneumonia, she explained.

Yet despite their shrinking membership, mainline churches are flush with funds, thanks to their centuries of prominence and prestige. Will they resuscitate the ailing NCC? They may not resort to euthanasia, but neither will they administer life support forever.

Mark Tooley is a research associate at the Institute on Religion and Democracy in Washington, D.C.

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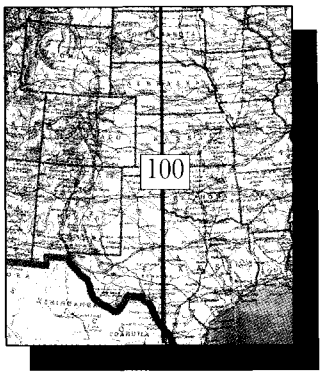
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Voice of the Turtle



"*Niuno è solo l'april!*" Mimì tells Rodolfo in Act Three of *La Bohème*. Mimì didn't survive until April, and if she had she might have felt alone without Rodolfo anyway. Still, spring, like sex, is exuberant, irrational—rather, it's suprarational. And unignorable, like a 70-mile-an-hour wind, which is what spring amounts to in most of the Rocky Mountain West. Wyoming has nothing properly describable as spring, only a prolonged battle to the death between the lengthening light and the Arctic air mass retreating grudgingly north, evocative of *Die Götterdämmerung* in a murky Bayreuth production by Wieland Wagner. To date, the power of light has prevailed eventually over that of darkness—sometimes not until the Fourth of July weekend or even later—but you never can tell. It gets wearisome now and then; still, the annual cancellation of springtime is just another of those blessings in disguise, like solitude and no state income tax, easily recognized as such by people who belong here. If nothing else, it acts as a means of population control, a seasonal prophylaxis discouraging immigration on the part of outsiders while depressing sex drive in the natives. Most years since 1995, the Wyoming census has duly recorded a decline of a few hundred, a few thousand souls—we're the only state in the Union to be able to boast of that honor, though for some reason (progressive brainwashing by the ultramontane culture, perhaps) few of us do. Logically speaking, Ed Abbey should have made Wyoming, not the ever-expanding margins of Tucson, Arizona, home to his Wolf's Hole retreat. Why didn't he do it? Because he hated snow and cold weather, of course. (Sorry, Ed, wherever you are: We didn't do it to exclude *you*.)

Following a mild winter, this year there are at least *signs* of spring, which is not always the case in Wyoming. Some mornings the water in the horse trough ripples smoothly in the early breeze, not so much as a skim of ice to remove with the shovel. My measure of winter's severity is less the heating bills than how much hay is left by Memorial Day; by early March of this year it was already apparent we were coming out ahead, with plenty of last year's fodder going into next winter. The horses, barrel-bellied on just a third of a 110-pound bale a day, barely look up from grazing the brown grass to acknowledge the pickup as I turn into the ranch yard: When they come running at last with their manes and tails flowing, sunfishing and kicking their heels in the air, it's more from habit, or curiosity, or affection—who knows the emotional life of horses?—than hunger.

The bird life in Laramie is still largely restricted to rock doves, sparrows, ravens and crows, and the five parrots I keep indoors, but in late February, on the way over to Kansas to visit the Detrixhes and again on the return trip, I saw waterfowl in numbers recalling the amazed reports of the early explorers and settlers on the High Plains: elongated V's of north-flying geese and ducks, clouds of sandhill cranes glittering like locusts as the sun strikes their bellies and the undersides of their wings, funnels of snow geese spiraling from the sky to alight on the thin green fields of winter wheat, hundreds of thousands of them covering the swells and depressions like a localized snowstorm; every lake and water impoundment along Interstate 80 between Ogallala and York, Nebraska, black with resting birds—Canada geese, mallards, teal, and others I didn't recognize from the highway at 70 miles an hour. *Niuno è solo l'april.*

If I were a bird I wouldn't be returning to North Dakota or Manitoba just yet. Spring is the time to be in the Southwest, before the thermometer climbs above 100 but after the snowbirds have got into their Winnebagos and gone home to the "polises" (Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Abominapolis). Cabaret, the singer Andrea Marcovicci has written, is where you go for tenderness. And cabernet. And, in springtime, the civilized (meaning the least populated) regions of the American Southwest: southern Utah and Colorado, northern New Mexico and Arizona. What more tender than budded cottonwoods standing in swirls of foaming brown floodwater, prickly pear in red-and-yellow blossom on the warming pink sand, the song of tree frogs from the creek bottom, white clouds making up against a cyanic sky, snows melting out from the tawny foothills of blue distant mountains, the brilliance of Orion in the southwestern sky behind the ragged red flames of a campfire? Camped up a side canyon in Nine Mile Canyon, Utah, searching for petroglyphs among chunks of sandstone like broken red china and pygmy rattlesnakes emerging from hibernation, while men mounted on winter-fat quarterhorses ride at full gallop through the sagebrush, the tails of their yellow slickers flying. Backpacking off the north rim of the Grand Canyon with Tom Sheeley, family, and friends, among them his good buddy Maddy Albright (home from strong-arming Putin in Moscow) who gets to carry the heaviest pack. Defying the Forest Service by building an open fire in a restricted area and the surgeon general by getting drunk on Jim Beam. Or just sitting in the shade of a juniper tree reading a novel by Thomas McGuane, as I did the year I broke my leg skiing across the absolutely level surface between the parking lot and the Beaver Mountain ski lodge, while clutching a bottle of beer in each hand along with the ski pole.

What passes for springtime in the Northern Tier has its moments, of course. It's pleasant, for instance, to imagine the million-plus inhabitants of Salt Lake City and vicinity playing golf and tennis and watching the crocuses and tulips come up around the Mormon Temple while you shovel out to the mailbox for your copy of a spring seed catalogue specializing in varieties (lettuces, radishes, cucumbers, and some types of

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squash) that flourish in a ten-week growing season. Yard work is a rewarding sport that nevertheless cannot be practiced with two or three feet of snow on the ground; in Wyoming, it generally has to be postponed until Memorial Day, well before the lilacs are in bloom. And for the hardy and the young at heart, there are mud sports, the season beginning around the Ides of March, sometimes earlier. During my oilpatch days 20 years ago, Jack Mootz and I were dedicated mud bums, never missing an opportunity to discover some impacted backcountry or mountain trail slowly melting out from beneath five or six feet of snow and mire our four-wheel-drive vehicle there, 50 or 60 miles from the nearest town, 30 or 40 from the closest blacktop. The best location is on a sidehill, preferably becoming a cliff a few yards downslope, with trees growing close beside the trail to limit maneuverability and prevent an easy turnaround. Although we usually took Jack's truck, a mid-70's GMC Jimmy he'd bought for a crew car, at other times we took my '78 Toyota Landcruiser—a noble vehicle whose abilities Jack liked to accuse me of underexploiting. "G--damn it, Chipper—didn't nobody never show you how to rock a truck? *I* know how to make that little Ti-yota talk—let *me* get after her!" In circumstances like these, unsticking a truck requires a considerable outlay of expensive, high-tech gear—tire chains front and back, of course; a sheepherder jack (famous for jumping out from under the vehicle and maiming innocent bystanders); a winch and come-along (optional); shovels; tar paper squares for traction beneath the tires; sagebrush and small logs (same purpose); a magnum rifle for poaching stray elk; sandwiches; beer. For extrication, plan at least three to four hours, with night beginning to fall and a spring blizzard on the horizon. On one of the few occasions when we made it out of the mountains *without* getting stuck, Jack left the blacktop—unexpectedly, at 30 miles an hour—in pursuit of a fleeing jackrabbit he'd tried to run down and sank the Jimmy to the frame in several feet of corn snow and bentonite mud. We spent only an hour on that job before thumbing a ride with a sheriff's deputy back to Kemmerer and returning after dark with the Landcruiser and a long tow chain.

Throughout the Rocky Mountain region, the winter of 1996-97 was dry until the end of February, when all hell broke loose with a major winter storm that delayed my return from Belen, New Mexico, where I'd spent a couple of months visiting Jim Rauen. During March and April, snowstorms followed one another like rollers breaking on the Pacific Coast. May was cold and wet, with more storms, and early in June I lost a yard tree to a wet, heavy snow that brought powerlines down across southwest Wyoming. Around the middle of the month, having found a buyer for the house, I flew to El Paso in search of a temporary rental in Las Cruces. The temperature was 103 degrees, the sun raging like an angry God in a porcelain sky. Life at womb temperature never has been my cup of tea, but southern New Mexico was going to be something new, an adventure. I wrote a check to the real estate office, explored the Organ Mountains while the evaporating sweat left a rime of salt on my skin, and bummed around over in Juárez, Mexico, before boarding a flight back to Salt Lake City. In Wyoming the weather appeared to have moderated: The snowdrift had melted from the north side of the house, the horses were slicking off finally, the last of their winter coats coming away in tufts, and the backcountry roads were drying out. By the second weekend in July, with the house packed up, the paperwork completed, the U-Haul van safely corralled (or so I thought, but that's another story), I had the time to pay my respects to the country I was leaving after 20 years and didn't expect to be seeing again any time soon.

Nothing in life is ever so beautiful as when it's over. In late afternoon of a perfect midsummer day the valley of the Hamsfork, its sagebrush floodplain narrowing to a willowy meander between dark timbered ridges, was heartbreakingly lovely. At the campground we took the middle fork in the road climbing to the east above Indian Creek and then north to Poker Hollow, where we stopped at an old sheep camp in the saddle of a crossover ridge and picketed the horses to graze on the new green grass growing lushly among arrowleaf balsam in yellow flower. While Norma built a fire ring, I pitched the tent in a grove of pine trees. It was early still when we had the camp ready, plenty of daylight left to burn. We brought the horses in, saddled them, and rode down across Poker Hollow and up to the old Commissary Commando camp above Little Indian Creek. In a high park overlooking the Hamsfork we sat the horses, looking north through slanting golden light to the crossways confusion of ridges, Mt. Isabel, and Graham Peak.

"I don't want to leave this," I told Norma.

"You can always come back to it if you don't like New Mexico."

"Maybe I can, and maybe I can't," I said.

In camp we built up the fire, cooked our supper, and ate it. I brought the horses in and snubbed them to the trailer. The night was warm and clear. We spread our bags at the base of a tall pine and lay on our backs to watch the stars pricking through the branches. Two hours later, a light rain on my face woke me to the sound of distant thunder.

"Good thing I went ahead and put the tent up," I said.

"This isn't the way it's supposed to happen. It only rains if you *don't* put up the tent."

The rain sound on the nylon fly changed to the rattle of hail as we crawled deeper into the sleeping bags. At dawn the light through the tent wall was strangely pale. Norma put her hand through the door and felt about on the ground.

"It snowed six inches last night," she said, drawing the hand inside.

The snow persisted until noon, then turned to rain again. We'd planned on riding as far as Red Park, 15 miles on a northerly heading, a farewell to my old elk hunting country. Sh-- happens. Hanging about camp, we worked at keeping dry and finding dry wood to burn in the fire. The horses, restless and miserable, wandered through camp, thrusting their long noses over our shoulders as we sat on a log to eat supper and watch the dirt road turn to a slough of mud.

"If this rain keeps up all night," I said, "we're going to be stuck in here for the next two days."

It snowed again during the night. The morning was much colder, but clear. We saddled the horses and rode as far as Commissary Ridge above Fontenelle Basin, with a view of Wyoming Peak 20 miles north. In the early morning sun, its triangular form gleamed like an iceberg against a pale frozen sky.

I reined in the horse with stiffened hands.

"If this is Wyoming's goodbye to me, I'm glad to be saying goodbye to Wyoming," I said.

For one reason and another, it didn't exactly turn out that way.

c

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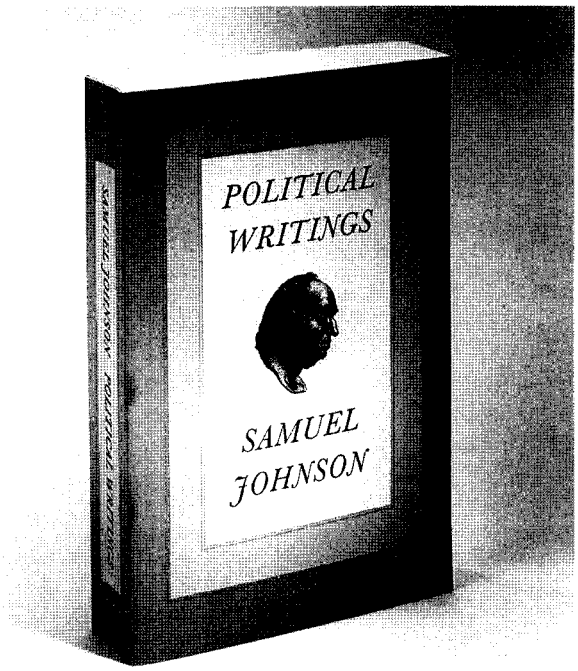

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